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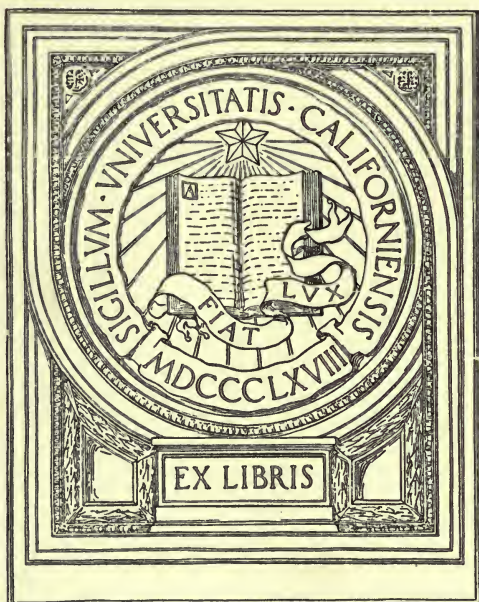
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Manual
of
English Literature
by
A. Hamann



Otto Bremer

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Manual of English Literature

by

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P r e f a c e.

Whether a German by birth and education may venture to write a History of English Literature *in English*, I must leave to my English-speaking friends in England and America to decide.

My intention in writing this Manual was to produce a book which might serve as a guide through the maze of English Literature to German and English students alike. In the interest of the former I have tried to spare them all unnecessary detail, concentrating my attention on the most important poets and leaders of thought, and showing, at the same time, the intimate connection of literature and political history. For my English-speaking readers it may be interesting to see what standard a foreigner who has for more than forty years either lived in England itself or lovingly and gratefully devoted his leisure hours in Germany to the study of English history and literature, applies to the representative men in the literature of the Anglo-Saxon Race which undoubtedly stands foremost — may I say *shoulder to shoulder with Germany*? — in the great battle for light and progress which will decide the future destinies of Mankind.

Berlin, January 1911.

Albert Hamann.

Summary.

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FIRST PERIOD.

Old English Literature.

INTRODUCTION.

The first inhabitants of the British islands were a branch of the great Celtic race which we find at the dawn of history spread over the whole of Western Europe. They were kinsmen of those Gauls who sacked Rome and who were in their turn conquered by Julius Caesar. The Britons too were subjugated by the Romans who held the country for more than three hundred years. When, at last, they withdrew their legions to protect Rome against Alaric, the Britons were unable to maintain their newly recovered independence. Bands of German pirates invaded the country and gradually advancing westward and northward, expelled or destroyed the fated children of the soil. The hero in the death-struggle of the Celtic race in Britain, — a British successor of that splendid champion of Gaul in her last resistance against Rome, Vercingetorix, — was King Arthur who became the legendary ideal of the conquered Britons pent up in the mountain fastnesses of Wales, until this last refuge too failed them and the new Prince of Wales was born in Carnarvon Castle — of English blood. The work of the conqueror must have been done thoroughly, for hardly a vestige of the language of the conquered race is to be found in the English which we speak, though in Wales, in the West of Ireland, and in some sequestered valleys of the Highlands of Scotland, Celtic dialects have survived to the present day. But as Greece avenged herself on victorious Rome by making the conqueror adopt her arts, her philosophy, and her gods, so the poetical genius of that doomed race triumphed over the German invaders by making them draw their finest inspirations from the Arthurian legend.

The Anglo-Saxon Period.

The German tribes which invaded Britain in the fifth century and gradually spread westward to the foot of the Welsh mountains and northward to the Grampians came from the German shores of the North Sea and of the Baltic, — heathen barbarians of unbroken ferocity speaking the Low German dialect which was the language of the plain of North Germany, a language akin in its consonantism to Gothic and Icelandic. Of these tribes — Jutes, Frisians, Angles, and Saxons — the last two were the most important; the Saxons occupied the South and the West, the Angles the North and the East of the country. In the course of the next two centuries seven kingdoms were founded, of which Northumbria between the Humber and the Forth, and Wessex along the coast of the English Channel were the most powerful. These Germans settled down to be peaceful tillers of the soil and breeders of cattle, and finding themselves surrounded by numerous traces of Roman civilisation, their manners became softened, and when Christianity was introduced amongst them about 600 by St. Augustine, it spread with prodigious rapidity. For, strange to say, a depth and tenderness of feeling, a bias of the mind to speculate on the Eternal, underlies the apparent ferocity of the Anglo-Saxon character; we shall see it burst forth again and again, defy the sneers of sceptics, and assert itself in ever-renewed attempts to approach God.

The German settlers certainly brought some rude poetry from their home beyond the sea, ballads, war-songs, hymns in honour of their gods and of the heroes of their race; but before they could develop into some great national epic, the introduction of Christianity put a stop to the creative force at work in the mass of the people. The poetry which survived was preserved by Benedictine monks who loved their national songs but tried to make them innocuous by administering to the reader along with the traditions of heathenish barbarity the antidote of Christian homilies. The most important relic of these earliest times is

THE SONG OF BEOWULF.

A manuscript of it is preserved to us in the Cottonian Library of the British Museum. It probably dates from the 10th century. The manuscript has been seriously damaged by fire, so that a great part out of the middle of the poem was destroyed; so much however has been left comparatively unscathed that it, nevertheless, represents the greatest

and most valuable relic of early Germanic poetry. Though the scene of the poem is laid in Zealand and in the South of Sweden, and though it plays entirely among Danes and Goths, the feelings and manners represented are decidedly Anglo-Saxon. The author, whosoever he was, though singing of heathen times and heathen warriors in the true spirit of heathen Germany, was, notwithstanding, himself a Christian, unless we suppose that the original work of a heathen poet was interpolated in a Christian sense by a monkish poet of a later period. An event alluded to in the poem — the expedition, defeat, and death of King Hygelac in his war against the Frisians — fixes the date of the earliest composition; the poem cannot have existed before 520, that is to say it originated in England. As to the metre, the essential elements of Anglo-Saxon versification are, as Sweet says, accent and alliteration. "Each full (long) verse has at least four accented syllables, and is divided into two half (short) verses, divided by a pause, and bound together by alliteration: two accented syllables in the first half verse and one in the second beginning with any vowels or the same consonant. The number of unaccented syllables is indifferent."

þā vās on burgum
leóf leód-cýning,
folcum gefræge
aldor of earde),
heáh Healfdene;
gamol and guð-reóv,

Beóvulf Scyldinga
longe þrage
(fäder ellor hvearf,
óð þæt him eft onvóc
heóld þenden lifde,
glæde Scyldingas.

(Then there was in the castle
Beloved people's king
Famous among men
The prince from his estate)
The sublime Healfdene;
Old and warlike,

Beovulf of the Shildings
for a long time
(his father had gone hence
until there was born later
he ruled as long as he lived
graciously the Shildings.)

Contents of the Poem.

Hrothgar, King of the Danes, has built a magnificent, far-famed 'mead-house' called Heorot (the hart or stag). There he assembles his thanes to feast in the hall when the harp is passed round and the song of the bard (scop) recalls the glorious deeds of old and inspires the warrior with bold resolves. But the joy of the hall is suddenly disturbed by a terrible monster, Grendel, the demon of the foul marshes that extend along the sea-shore. The monster bursts into the hall in the middle of the night and kills the men who lie there sunk in sleep and drinks their blood. The warriors who venture to fight with him are torn

to pieces. In vain Hrothgar sacrifices in the temples of the gods; gloom and despair spread over the land and Heorot lies deserted.

At this critical moment a deliverer appears: Beowulf, nephew of Hygelac, king of the Geáts, arrives in his swift boat and promises help. He is received in Heorot with great rejoicings. Again the mead-cup is presented to the knights by the king's daughter, again the harp resounds, and bold and defiant speeches are made and challenges exchanged. At last night descends and the tired guests stretch themselves out to sleep. Then the demon tears open the door and steps into the hall. Beowulf springs from his couch and grapples with the monster and the hall rings with the yells of the demon. Wounded to death he retraces his steps over the moor, leaving a track of blood behind him. Now all anxiety is ended and Heorot becomes once more the scene of joyous carousing.

But in the following night a more ferocious monster appears: Grendel's mother comes to avenge her son and cruelly kills the sleeping warriors. Then Beowulf resolves to track the demon to her lair. He follows her steps across the moor to a cove darkened by the shadows of pine-covered hills. Here the Danes assemble along the sea-shore to watch in breathless suspense the issue of the venture. Beowulf throws himself into the sea and disappears. The day passes and already the Danes begin to despair of seeing their deliverer return to the land of the living, when suddenly the water turns blood-red and Beowulf reappears carrying in each hand a monstrous head. And now he steps ashore, the people crowd around him, he kneels before the king laying the two heads at his feet, and he begins to tell of the terrible fight in the submarine cave where he found the mother-demon wailing over the body of her son. And then he would have been lost, had he not found a sword which at his entrance had fallen from the wall. This he seized and killed the terrible creature.

And now King Hrothgar is released of all care; peace and joy reign in the land, and Beowulf returns to his country laden with the blessings and the rich gifts of the Danes.

A deep gap in the text severs the end of the Song of Beowulf from the scenes related. When the curtain rises again, we find Beowulf, a venerable old man, King of the Geats ever since Hygelac fell in battle. The even tenor of his prosperous reign is suddenly interrupted by a fierce dragon whose wrath has been provoked by one of Beowulf's servants who stole a precious cup from the hoard which the dragon was watching. The incensed monster ravages the country, and far and wide at night-time the sky is red with the glare of blazing homesteads. When all his knights quail at the thought of fighting the demon, Beowulf resolves to sacrifice himself for his people. In the terrible fight which ensues on the lonely seashore near the cave of the monster, the dragon is slain, but not before he has scorched the king with the flames which dart from his jaws. Feeling death approach the grand old warrior sits down on a cliff overlooking the sea, and whilst his men throng around him, he sums up the deeds he accomplished and the duties he fulfilled, then bids an eternal farewell to his people and expires. Then his mourning warriors raise his tomb on a lofty promontory to be in times to come a landmark to the men of the North coming home from their venturous roving to the land of Beowulf.

Caedmon, Cynewulf, King Alfred, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

Beowulf is the only relic of Anglo-Saxon literature which represents the ancient Germanic and essentially pagan ideal of life. The other relics of Anglo-Saxon poetry bear the stamp of the new faith which subdued these fierce Teutons with incredible rapidity. The monasteries of the Order of St. Benedict were the centres of Christian teaching; they accomplished that conquest by which these freedom-loving barbarians were subjected to the new King who had died on the cross far-away in Palestine. The Christian Olympus with God Almighty, the blessed Saviour, the Holy Angels, and the Saints took the place of Walhalla with its gods and heroes. Latin was the language of the international church; Latin was once more imposed upon the world by twice-victorious Rome as the language of culture in the schools, in science, history, and diplomacy. But to get at the hearts of the people in song these monks had to use the dear old familiar German.

We have to distinguish two periods of poetical production, that of *Northumbria* and that of *Wessex*. The former is the earlier one; in the 8th century it was the North that took the lead in original composition. The monastery of Whitby, on a cliff overlooking the German ocean, was the centre of light. **Caedmon and Cynewulf** were the greatest among the singers of the time.

But in the 9th century this culture was swept away by the invasion of the Danes; the convents were sacked and destroyed, their inmates cruelly butchered. Then Wessex rekindled the sacred spark of poetry, and the poets of the North revived, but in the language of the South, the dialect of Wessex; and it is only in this form that we possess them.

Whilst in contemporary Germany the two so-called Gospel-Harmonies — the Heliand and the Christ — were written in which the Lord appears like a German King and the apostles like his vassals, and the towns of Palestine look like early German castles, in England among their kinsmen on the other side of the German Ocean the Bible and the Legends of the Saints and Martyrs became the fountain-head of poetical inspiration, and in a grand, naïve, and true-hearted language we are told of the Revolt of the Angels, the Fall of Lucifer, the Creation of the World, of Paradise and the Fall of Man, of the Birth of the Redeemer, of His Temptation, His Teaching and His Miracles, His Death on the Cross, His Descent into Hell, His Resurrection and Ascension. When we read *Caedmon's Bible Paraphrase* we cannot help thinking that Milton must have known his ancient prede-

cessor. Among the poems ascribed to *Cynewulf*, about whose personality we know as little as about *Caedmon*, we find *Elene* which contains the narration of the miraculous discovery of the Holy Cross by the Empress Helena, the wife of Constantine.

The creator of **Anglo-Saxon Prose** is no other than the great and good *King Alfred* himself (871—901); who saved his country from the Danes and gave peace and prosperity to his people.

He it was who endeavoured to educate his subjects by creating a literature all by himself. His translations of Latin standard books such as Beda's Ecclesiastical History of England, Boëthius' Consolation of Philosophy, Orosius' History of the World, the Soliloquies of St. Augustine give us an idea of the literary standard and of the language of Anglo-Saxon England.

But besides the translations and laws of King Alfred there is that earliest and most interesting specimen of prose-composition in any Teutonic language, viz. the **Anglo-Saxon Chronicle**, — annals of English history, written by different authors (mostly priests) at different times, extending from about 755 to 1154; one part of it is supposed to have been written by King Alfred himself. The style of the work naturally varies a good deal; sometimes it is very dry and matter-of-fact, other passages are graphic and powerful. The even tenor of the narrative is on some occasions interrupted by an outburst of real poetic feeling, the two finest passages being the Song of Victory that celebrates the battle of Brunanburh when in 937 King Athelstan defeated the allied hosts of Danes, Scots, and Irish and the description of the Death of Byrhtnoth, Ealdorman of Essex, who fell in the battle of Maldon, resisting the invasion of the Danes in 991.

But in the 10th century the power of Saxon England was rapidly waning and in the following centuries the English had to submit to the rule of foreigners, — Danes, Normans, Angevins.

The Norman Conquest; Old English.

LITERATURE IN NORMAN ENGLAND.

The Battle of Hastings in 1066 changed the face of the land. The French-speaking Normans became the masters, the German-speaking Saxons were henceforth a subject race that tilled the land and fed the cattle for the new owners of the soil. Like two rivers which are forced to flow in the same bed, but refuse to join, the two races and the two languages

flowed on side by side without intermixture. The King and the courtier, the baron and the bishop spoke French and continued to look upon France as their real home from which they were absent for a time in order to garrison a dependency; the yeoman and the serf, the craftsman and the humble parish-priest were the children of the soil clinging to their German speech and traditions.

And so there were also two literatures side by side ignoring each other — one French, breathing the spirit of the *trouvères* and *troubadours* of the time, the other Saxon, continuing the simple strain of the German forefathers of the people. But it is not to be wondered at that the latter gradually dried up and withered being cut off from the great interests of national life.

The two last important representatives of Anglo-Saxon poetry are the *Ormulum* and *Layamon's Brut*, both written about the year 1200, in a language purely and solely Teutonic.

The Ormulum is the work of an Augustine monk, Orm or Ormin by name, who lived in central England and wrote in the dialect of Mercia. The book is a paraphrase of the Gospels of the year accompanied by a commentary and written in a very prosy and cumbrous style. Surely it is not the poetical value of the work that makes us rejoice in its preservation; it is the great philological interest attached to it, for it contains a vast treasure of pure Anglo-Saxon bearing no trace of those Latin and French influences already at work to transform the language.

Of far more importance as a literary production is **Layamon's Brut** which in a certain manner foreshadows the reconciliation of the three races inhabiting England at that time: Norman-French, Anglo-Saxon, Celtic.

Layamon was a Saxon priest who lived on the confines of Wales. Here he became acquainted with the legends that had twined round the majestic figure of the great champion of the Celtic race, King Arthur. A strange fiction had sprung up — probably from an etymological error, a false derivation of the name of the Britons from Brutus, son of Aeneas — that the Kings of Britain like the imperial house of Augustus traced their descent back to the same source, — the race of Priam; and Layamon's *Brut* is a recital of the deeds of these fabulous Kings of the Celtic race culminating in the wonderful exploits of Arthur and his Round Table. But this Anglo-Saxon poem is only an improved paraphrase of the „*Roman du Brut*“ by Maître Wace of Jersey who was not an original poet either, but drew his inspiration from the Latin *Historia Britonum* of the Welsh priest Geoffrey of Monmouth, the great fountain-head of the Arthurian

legend, a Latin version of those wonderful Mabinogion or romantic tales which were at that time sung and recited at every fireside in the Principality of Wales. Thus then an Englishman of German blood reproduced in English the book of a French poet who had borrowed his subject from a Welshman. But Layamon knew also King Alfred's translation of Beda's history of England, for he says:

Layamon leide theos boc,
 And tha leaf wende.
 He heom leofliche bi-heold,
 Lithe him beo drihten.
 Fetheren he nom mid fingren,
 And fiede on boc-felle,
 And tha sothe word
 Sette to-gadere:
 And tha thre boc
 Thrumde to ane.

("Layamon laid before him these books, and turned over the leaves; lovingly he beheld them. May the Lord be merciful to him! Pen he took with fingers and wrote on book-skin, and the true words set together; and the three books compressed into one." — quoted from Garnett and Gosse's *History of English Literature*.)

In Layamon's work then we have the first indication of that noble revenge which the conquered Celtic race took on their German conquerors by forcing them to pay homage to their own ideal of manhood and of kingcraft, King Arthur, whom we shall meet again as the ideal of chivalry in Spenser's *Fairy Queen* and as the modern ideal of the true gentleman in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*.

The last great writer whose view of life and whose language bear hardly a trace of the French influence at work in England since the conquest, is

Robert Langland, the author of the *Vision of Piers Plowman*, who lived more than a hundred years after Layamon in the 14th century, a contemporary of Chaucer. But whilst Chaucer represents the happy way of thinking of the members of the ruling class, the gay and gallant aspect of the age, its jollity and enjoyment of the good things of life, Langland looks at the world from below, from the midst of toil and misery and grieves over, or mocks at the faults and the insufficiency of existence.

The deep religious feeling characteristic of the Saxon race, vents itself in his poem with elementary force as three hundred years later in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and in the 18th century in the great religious revival of John Wesley. Indeed Langland appears before us as a prophet denoun-

cing the sins of contemporary society, preaching repentance, and exhorting men to aspire after a higher life. It is the time of the Black Death and of an almost universal anarchy, when people sought for comfort and found none; for it is also the time of the utter corruption of the Church, of the Babylonish captivity of the Pope; the great Schism is approaching and the Reformation throws its shadow before it. Then Langland comes forward as a social and religious reformer speaking the homely language of the great Saxon mass of the people; and so he finds willing ears and leaves a lasting impression. Therefore he is a fellow-worker and ally of Wycliffe; but whilst the Oxford professor represents the theological side of the movement, Langland deals with its moral aspect. And from this stand-point he bitterly comments on the worldliness of the Papacy, the luxury and corruption of the clergy, the traffic in relics and indulgences, the sale of Church offices. This is the picture he draws of the priests:

“On the poor have they no pity; and this is her charity!
And they letten hem as lords, her lands lie so broad.
Ac there shall come a King and confess you, Religious,
And beat you, as the Bible telleth, for breaking of your rule,
And put hem to penance —
And then shall the Abbot of Abingdon, and all his issue for ever
Have a knock of a King and incurable the wound.”

A most extraordinary prophecy of what took place a century and a half later under Henry VIII, reminding us of the passage in Milton's *Lycidas* where the poet threatens ten years before the execution of Charles with „that two-handed engine at the door“ which

„stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.“

In the Vision of *Piers Plowman* the author tells us that one fair morning in May he lay down on the Malvern Hills, fell fast asleep, and had a wonderful dream in which he was carried out into the world to see the wickedness and misery of men. At length *Piers Plowman* appears — not the author himself, but a grand mystic figure, the Redeemer himself, who preaches universal love, good works, truth, and humility. Also in this poem as in the *Fairy Queen*, in Milton's *Comus*, and in the *Pilgrim's Progress Allegory*, that besetting sin of English poetry, plays an important part — Meed (Self-Interest), Conscience, Reason, Truth, Kynde (Nature), the Seven Deadly Sins appear before us as in the *Moralities* of the stage.

SECOND PERIOD.

Middle English Literature.

INTRODUCTION.

Up to the reign of King John the conquered Saxons and the Norman-French conquerors lived a separate life, speaking two distinct languages. The loss of the French provinces in consequence of the battle of Bouvines (1214) under King John severed the Norman barons in England from their former home and forced them to make their choice between France and England. Their hostility to their Angevin King and his French minions induced them to join hands with the Saxon yeomen and burghers. The Great Charter, extorted from the King in 1215, did not only secure the liberties of the people against an encroaching monarch, but bridged the gulf between the two races, so that the day of Runnymede became the birth-hour of the English nation. From that time dates the gradual reconciliation of the races and the amalgamation of the languages, a process continuing during the 13th and 14th centuries. The great bulk of the new language thus forming was German, the grammar as well as the vocabulary of the simple life of an Englishman used in his family, his household, his trade, to express his thoughts and feelings: his love, his hate, his hopes and fears, his prayer; — whilst the phraseology of a more advanced generation with its higher culture, its political and social structure, the interests of refined life are borrowed from the French, — *not* from the Latin; *that* borrowing did not begin before the 16th century.

The Hundred Years' War with France hastened the process of amalgamation; a national feeling, a pride of being English and not French had sprung up and finished to weld the two refractory metals together into one harmonious and well-tempered whole. The Great Peace of 1360,

which made the King of England lord paramount of the fairest provinces of France, shows this new nation, the victors of Cressy and Poitiers, in its new-won glory, and at the same time the new language, the King's English, is acknowledged as the legitimate language of the Courts of Law and of Parliament; soon it supplants French altogether, and the youth of England in the grammar schools and universities begin to construe the Latin authors in English, whilst French, cut off from all connection with the centre of French life in Paris, degenerates into a despised patois. Then this new nation and its speech was ready to find its mouthpiece in the first great English poet, Geoffrey Chaucer.

Fourteenth Century.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

Chaucer was born in London about the year 1340. His father was a wine-merchant, his family was of Norman-French descent. His education seems to have been most careful. In 1359 he joined the English army in France, was taken prisoner, but was released after the Peace of Bretigny in 1360. In 1367 we find him in the service of King Edward III who sent him to Italy to conclude a treaty of commerce with the republic of Genoa in 1372. Two years later he was appointed controller of taxes in the port of London. His wife, lady of honour to Queen Philippa, was a sister of that Katharine Swynford who became the wife of John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, after the death of his first wife, Blanche of Castile. In 1378 he was again sent abroad to Flanders and to France, and in 1378 King Richard II entrusted to him a message to the Duke of Milan — his second prolonged stay in Italy. The later years of his life do not seem to have been unclouded; the disgrace of his brother-in-law, John of Gaunt, threw a shadow on his path. He died in 1400 and was buried in Westminster Abbey where in 1556 a monument was erected to him in the Poets' Corner.

From this short sketch of Chaucer's life we can gather that the poet enjoyed every facility of studying human life both in his own country and in the great centres of contemporary civilisation: the Netherlands, France, Italy. He does not only combine in his person the Norman-French and the Saxon types, but he comes under the spell of that wonderful dawn of the Renaissance which began in Italy at the time of Petrarch and Boccaccio. So he unites in his poetry classical and romantic elements. In his early youth French influence prevailed. He translated the famous

'Romaunt of the Rose' and wrote an allegorical poem on the 'death of Blanche the Duchesse of Lancaster'. At a later period he studied the great Italian poets of his time; as we see in his 'Palamon and Arcite', 'Troilus and Criseyde', the 'Legend of Good Women', the 'House of Fame'. At last he made himself quite independent of foreign models and came forth as a truly national and original poet in his **Canterbury Tales**. They are no imitation of Boccaccio's Decamerone, but may certainly be compared with it in regard to their respective position in the literature of the world and in their national importance. Both Chaucer and Boccaccio, are masters in the art of story-telling, both command a comprehensive knowledge of human character and experience of life; both are men of original genius and of a wide horizon, possessing moreover the divine gift of humour. Both have created a national language and have left an indelible trace in the literature of their people. But the work of Chaucer must be acknowledged to rank higher as a historical document. The three gentlemen and seven ladies who assemble in the famous villa on the heights of Fiesole to forget the horrors of the scenes which are being enacted in plague-stricken Florence, are representatives of one class of people, the golden youth of a pleasure-loving aristocracy, nor is any attempt made at delineating their individual characters, nor is there any intimate connection between the story told and the person that tells it. Chaucer on the other hand has produced a complete gallery of life-size portraits of every possible type of the English people of his time, and the stories his men and women tell, bring out in the choice of subject and style, the character of the story-teller. These 30 figures stand out before us painted with an accuracy and a love of detail and insight into human-nature like the famous pictures of a Van Dyke, Franz Hals, Rembrandt. In this manner the English society of the 14th century passes before us and becomes a living reality.

To attain this object the poet devises an ingenious frame for his stories: a pilgrimage to the shrine of the national saint of England Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury. And indeed a pilgrimage was the only and the most plausible occasion for all the ranks of society and types of humanity to mix freely and without constraint. On the 18th of April 1391 twenty-nine pilgrims assemble at the Tabard Inn in Southwark, in the south of London, to start on their journey to Canterbury, looking forward with pleasure to the ride through lovely Kent, the garden of England, in the fine season of spring: when '*smale fowles maken melodie*'. Then Mine Host makes the proposal that they should all ride together and that they should, each of them, tell two stories in going

and two in returning; the person who told the best story should be solemnly entertained and feasted in this same Tabard Inn at the end of their pilgrimage. And the proposal is joyfully accepted and was no doubt intended to be carried out, but the plan was too vast and the poet died before he had finished the fourth part of his work. We possess only 24 tales — pious, romantic, pathetic, heroic, sentimental, humorous, and comical according to the character of the narrator. And now let us review some of the pilgrims. The aristocracy are represented by a *Knight and his son*.

A knight ther was, and that a worthy man,
That from the tyme that he first bigan
To ryden out, he lovede chyvalrye,
Trouthe and honour, freedom and curteisie. —
With him ther was his sone, a yong Squyer,
A lovyere¹, and a lusty bachelor,
With lokkes crulle² as they were leyd in presse.
Of twenty year of age he was I gesse. — —
He cowde³ songes make and wel endite⁴,
Juste⁵ and eek daunce, and well purtreye and write.
So hote he lovede, that by nightertale
He sleep nomore than doth a nightyngale.
Curteys he was, lowely, and servysable,
And carf⁶ byforn his fader at the table.

Then follows a *prioress*, a charming old maid:

Ful wel she sang the servise divyne,
Entuned in hire nose ful semely⁷;
And French she spak ful faire and fetysly⁸,
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For French of Parys was to her unknowe. — —
But for to speken of hire conscience,
Sche was so charitable and so pitous⁹,
Sche wolde weepe if that she sawe a mous
Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde. — —
Ful fetys was hire cloke, as I was waar¹⁰.
Of smal coral aboute hire arm sche baar¹¹
A peire of bedes gauded al with grene;
And thereon heng a broch of gold ful schene¹²,
On which was first i-write a crowned A,
And after, Amor vincit omnia.

¹ a lover. ² curly. ³ could. ⁴ to recite. ⁵ joust or tilt in a tournament. ⁶ carved the meat. ⁷ comely, elegantly. ⁸ neatly. ⁹ pityful.
¹⁰ I was aware. ¹¹ wore. ¹² beautiful.

A monk follows, and a well-fed, rosy-looking sportsman he is:

He was not pale as a for-pyned¹ goost.
A fat swan lovede he best of eny roost.

Next comes a jolly friar:

Ful sweetely herde he confessioun,
And plesaunt was his absolucioun.

A Clerk of Oxenford represents the teaching body; alas, he is lean and threadbare —

As lere was his hors as is a rake,
And he was not right fat, I undertake. — —
Sownynge in moral vertu was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

As a welcome contrast to the worldly priests there appears before us a poor country-parson

“That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;
His parischens² devoutly wolde he teche —
He waytede after³ no pompe and reverence,
Ne makede him a spiced⁴ conscience,
But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
He taughte, but first he folwede⁵ it himselve.”

Let us close our selection with the famous *Wife of Bath*.

“Upon an amblere⁶ esily sche sat,
Ywympled wel, and on hire heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler⁸ or a targe⁹ — —
Sche was a worthy womman al hire lyfe,
Housbondes at chirche dore sche hadde fyfe”

Of the stories told by the pilgrims probably that of *Patient Griseldis* told by the Clerk of Oxenford is best known. The authors of the period delighted in telling the story of the Marquis of Saluzzo who tried the patience and fidelity of his wife beyond endurance. But whilst neither Petrarch nor Boccaccio have a word of blame for the folly of the cruel husband, Chaucer, with the Englishman's innate love of fairness and chivalrous feeling towards the fair sex, breaks out into words of reproof:

He hadde assayed¹⁰ hire ynogh bifore,
And foond her ever goode, — what needed it
Hire for to tempte, and alway moore and moore?

¹ wasted away. ² parishioners. ³ looked out for. ⁴ sophisticated.
⁵ followed. ⁶ a nag. ⁷ decked with a veil. ⁸ buckler or shield. ⁹ round shield (Tartsche). ¹⁰ put to the test, try.

Though som men preise it for a subtil wit,
 But as for me, I seye that yuele it sit
 To assaye a wyf whan that it is no nede,
 And putten hire in angwyssh and in drede.

Prose Writers: Mandeville, Wycliffe.

The first prose-writers of the new mixed language are Sir John Mandeville and John Wycliffe. **Mandeville** is the first great English traveller, a Marco Polo of the fourteenth century. For 34 years he is supposed to have travelled about in Europe and Asia, and when he returned to England in 1356, he published the story of his travels in Latin, French, and English. The following passage will give an idea of his prose.

Ye shull understand that I have put this book out of Latin into French, and translated it agen out of French into English, that every man of my nation may understand it. But lords and knights, and other noble and worthy men, that con¹ Latin but little, and han ben beyond the sea, known and understooden gif I err in devising², for forgetting or else; that they mowe³ redress and amend it.

John Wycliffe (born about 1324, died 1384), the great religious reformer — who anticipated the work of Luther in his bold attack upon the abuses of the Church, resembles his German successor also in his literary importance. He not only recognised the edifying power of the singing of the congregation (hence the nickname of his followers: the Lollards viz. the singers), but wished above all to place the English Bible in the hands of the laity. His translation though nearly contemporaneous with the poetry of Chaucer, preserves to a much higher degree the Anglo-Saxon character of the language, which shows that whilst Chaucer wrote for the higher classes, Wycliffe addressed himself to the great mass of the people.

The following passage from the 24th chapter of St. Luke may serve as an example of Wycliffe's English.

Thei camen to the grave and broughten swete smelling spices that they hadden arayed.⁴ And thei founden the stoon turnyd away fro the grave. And they geden in⁵ and foundun not the bodi of the Lord Jhesus. And it was don, the while thei were astonyed in thought of this thing, lo twey men stodun⁶

¹ know, German können. ² reporting. ³ may. ⁴ prepared. ⁵ went in.
⁶ stood.

besidis hem¹ in schynnyng cloth. And whanne thei dredden and bowiden her² semblaunt³ into erthe, thei seiden⁴ to hem, what seeken ye him that lyveth with deede men? He is not here, but he is risun.

The Fifteenth Century.

The fifteenth century is a time of literary stagnation. During the first half of the century the entire energy of the English people was spent in the attempt to conquer France. The glorious career of Henry V was continued by his brother the Duke of Bedford. In 1429 came the turn of the tide, marked by the relief of Orleans by Joan of Arc. Then the French began to advance and by the middle of the century nothing was left of all the English conquests but the city of Calais. Then followed the English thirty years' war, the War of The Roses, which absorbed all the interest of the people. On the ruins of the feudal aristocracy a new England arose: the Monarchy of the Tudors leaning on the Middle Classes, favouring and developing industry, trade, commerce, and colonial expansion.

Popular Ballads.

Though no poet of the first order arose in England during the 15th century, poetry was not dead, the divine spark smouldered under the ashes. This is proved by a great number of popular ballads and love-songs which were sung all over England and have been preserved down to our own time. Their picturesque energy and simple pathos have been justly admired and imitated by Scott, Bürger, and Herder.

The ballad of **Chevy Chase** — or the Chase in the Cheviot Hills — immortalises the famous battle of Otterbourne, which took place in 1388, and in which the Scotch leader, Douglas, was killed whilst the English commander, Percy (Shakespeare's Hotspur), was taken prisoner. The ballad thus describes an incident in those terrible border feuds, of which both nations, the English as well as the Scotch, could be proud. The ballad is best characterised by the words of famous Sir Philip Sidney (the Bayard of the court of Queen Elizabeth), that the song of Chevy Chase stirred him up like the sound of a trumpet.

The following passage describes the death of Douglas:

¹ them. ² their. ³ face. ⁴ said.

2

winter on an errand over the stormy sea and who perishes with all his crew. The poem begins:

The King sits in Dunfermline town,
Drinking the blude-red wine;
'O where will I get a gude sailor
To sail this ship of mine?'

Up and spake an eldern Knight,
Sat at the King's right Knee:
'Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailor
That sails upon the sea.'

The favourite love-ballad of the 15th century was the Nut-Brown Maid. She loves a man who in order to try her devotion declares himself to be an outlaw whose only refuge is the forest, the burden of his song being:

For I must to the green-wood go,
Alone, a banished man.

But every argument with which he attempts to dissuade her from following him she refutes with passionate words, each verse ending with her assurance:

For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone.

At last her lover is satisfied and fully believes in her and declares:

I will not disparage
You (God defend!) sith ye descend
Of so great a lineáge.
Now understand; to Westmoreland,
Which is mine heritage,
I will you bring; and with a ring,
By way of mariáge
I will you take, and lady make,
As shortly as I can:
Thus have you won an earl's son,
And not a banished man.

The Mediaeval Drama.

As in ancient Greece the drama grew up as part of the service of the god Dionysos, so in England the mediaeval drama arose and grew up in the sacred precincts of the Church. It was the Church that represented

all the ideal forces of Humanity and as it made all the higher faculties of the mind serve its purposes in science, philosophy, and art, it was natural that it enlisted in its service also the gift of imitation and the delight men take in every kind of impersonation. In the aisles of churches and in the cloisters of monasteries arose the mediaeval drama. On the great Christian festivals, especially at Easter and Whitsuntide, scenes taken from the Scriptures and from the legends of the saints were performed by the younger monks in the precincts of the sacred buildings. These earliest plays were composed in Latin verse, but as only a few among the audience understood the sacred language, the chief stress was laid on the dumb show or representation by acting and gesticulation. All these plays are short and rude, but they breathe a naïve faith and a charming simplicity of feeling.

Gradually, however, the use of the vernacular crept in, at first in separate passages, and naturally those characters which were allowed to use it, soon absorbed the attention of the audience. The consequence was that often secondary characters of the poet's own invention — for these alone were at first permitted to speak the language of the people —, especially the low and droll ones, usurped the interest. What the performance thus gained in reality and delineation of human character, it lost in dignity, and what in the beginning seemed likely to increase the consideration due to the clergy, soon tended to lower it. Then the Pope interfered and everywhere edicts were published which forbade the clergy to take part in such performances. The result was that this kind of dramatical entertainment having grown too popular to be given up by the mass of the people, left the sacred precincts of churches and cloisters and established itself on an independent basis. The Latin language was now altogether abandoned and stages were raised in public places under the open sky or in the townhalls and guildhalls of cities. Thus towards the beginning of the 15th century this class of theatrical performance had altogether passed over into the hands of the laity. Corporations of tradesmen, scholars, and students had formed associations to represent these plays on the great festivals of the Church.

The plays now increased in length and importance; they comprised the whole drama of the fall and redemption of Man. Many scenes faithfully reproduced the narrative of the Bible; others were the free invention of the author, and bear the stamp of the rude age in which they originated. Great care was taken to come nearer to the reality of life in scenery and costume. The stage was furnished with a complicated machin-

ery and with different partitions to exhibit several scenes at the same time, for the play conducted us, in the words of Goethe,

vom Himmel durch die Welt zur Hölle.

During the first centuries after the Norman conquest French was the literary language of England, therefore it was no wonder that in the Miracle Plays French was introduced side by side with Latin. Nay even, when towards the end of the 14th century the new language which we call English, had come to be acknowledged as the official language of the country, the use of the French language was for some time continued on the stage for characters taken from the higher ranks of life, as if the people felt that French ought to be the language of birth and culture.

These Mysteries or Miracle Plays continued to be performed in spite of the Reformation down to the time of James I, when the rise of Puritanism among the English middle classes put a stop to what appeared to them sacrilegious and heathenish practices.

A few highly valuable collections of these elaborate compositions have been handed down to us —

the Coventry, the Townley, and the Chester Mysteries.

The last afford perhaps the most instructive example of these mediaeval plays. Every Whitsuntide crowds of visitors used to flock to Chester, the quaint and picturesque capital of the West of England. They came to witness the Plays which were performed once a year by the trades and corporations of that thriving commercial town. The Plays lasted three successive days and comprised the whole history of the fall and redemption of Man. The religious drama was divided into 24 scenes, each of which was represented by one of the trade-guilds of the town, which vied with each other as to which could exhibit the best furnished stage and the richest costumes. In those spring-days all Chester either played or looked on, assembled in the principal squares and places of the city, whilst cart after cart drove up and scene after scene from the life of the patriarchs or the Passion of Christ passed before the eyes of a multitude which followed the great drama with naïve, childlike belief and breathless expectation.

Simultaneously with the Miracle Plays and frequently interwoven with them arose the so-called **Moralities**. A Morality is a play which enforces a moral lesson by means of the speech and action of characters

which are personified abstractions — figures representing virtues and vices, qualities of the human mind; or abstract conceptions in general such as Charity and Envy, Humility and Pride, Church, State, England, Man. Allegory then is the base and essence of the Moral Plays. In the time of Henry VI (about 1450) the taste for allegory, fostered by the reading of *Piers the Plowman* and of the parables of the Holy Scriptures, caused these Moralities to be performed as a new kind of dramatical entertainment alongside with the Miracle Plays using the same stage and scenery. They were an outgrowth of the religious drama, though never quite so popular, until at the time of the reformation they became a vehicle to express public opinion about political and religious questions. The name *Interludes* occurs at an early time, because they were frequently performed during the intervals of banquets and public entertainments. Characters common to all the Moralities are the Devil and Vice; the latter is of English growth. Dressed in a fool's habit he teases and torments the Devil and amuses the audience with his jokes; he has survived in the regular drama as the domestic fool or clown. Counterbalancing the monotony of abstract characters, that of Vice favoured the growth of comedy as a development out of the Moralities.

Some of the most famous Moralities are: The Castle of Perseverance (under Henry VI.) where man and his seven trusty companions, the seven Cardinal Virtues, are besieged by the seven Deadly Sins and their commanders, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil (*Mundus, Caro, Belial*) in the Castle of Perseverance where *Confessio* told him to take up his abode. The play is an allegory of the conflict of the Powers of Good and the Powers of Evil for the Soul of Man. In 1531 a Morality appeared on the part of the Catholic Church, called *Every Man*, which glorifies the power of priesthood and of good deeds, whilst twenty years later under Edward VI another Morality, *Lusty Juventus*, breathes the spirit of the reformation. *Lusty Juventus* is no doubt the representation of Young England, strong in theology, believing no longer in Good Deeds (for the Church!), but in the justification by faith alone. In this play the Devil is of course on the side of the Pope and bitterly complains of the reformation:

Oh, oh, full well I know the cause
That my estimation does thus decay;
The old people would believe still in my laws,
But the younger sort lead them contrary way;
They will not believe, they plainly say,

In old traditions made by men,
But they will live as the Scripture teaches them.

The Moralities held their own to the end of the 16th century. Many plays hover on the boundary line between Morality and Comedy. The tendency asserts itself more and more to introduce real human personages of a typical kind by the side of the allegorical abstractions, and finally to drop the latter altogether.

THIRD PERIOD.

Modern English Literature (Part I).

THE 16th CENTURY.

The English Bible.

The sixteenth century, the most important in the history of Humanity, is a period of marvellous progress in the history of English Literature. The great forces at work in the whole of Western Europe — the great discoveries, the revival of the philosophy, the arts, and the poetry of ancient Greece and Rome, the reformation, and the invention of printing — developed the English Mind with extraordinary rapidity. The internal peace which resulted from the annihilation of the turbulent feudal aristocracy in the War of the Roses and from the foundation of a strong monarchy which enforced law and order, favoured commercial enterprise and navigation, and the study of the new learning which after the taking of Constantinople by the Turks spread over Italy, France, Germany, and England. Erasmus of Rotterdam and his English friend, the great statesman Sir Thomas More, Sir John Cheke, Thomas Wilson, Roger Ascham, and many other great scholars favoured the study of Greek at the schools and universities and spread the knowledge and love of the classics. Many translations contributed to make the authors of Greece and Rome, ancient history, legends, arts, philosophy, poetry, and mythology familiar to all educated people. But in the first half of the century the religious interests were even stronger than the new love of antiquity. The voice of Luther found a powerful echo in England. It is true that Henry VIII acted entirely from personal and selfish motives when he severed his country from Rome and that he constantly vacillated in his religious policy, now

forbidding, now allowing, now again partly suppressing the reading of the Bible, — still the minds of the people were deeply stirred and their yearning for truth and freedom would no longer be suppressed and burst forth triumphantly after the death of Henry VIII under his son Edward VI. It is true that the untimely death of the boy-king brought about a terrible reaction under Bloody Mary and that hundreds of martyrs died at the stake and thousands of Protestants had to flee from the country, but the danger that England should lose her political freedom and become a dependency of Spain under Mary's husband, Philip II, made every patriotic Englishman a stubborn Protestant. This is the time when the Bible — the only authority acknowledged by the Reformed Church after the defection from the Pope — became the house-hold book of the English people.

In the Middle Ages the Holy Scriptures were hardly known among the laity, as the study of the Bible was a privilege reserved for the priests. But when everybody became his own priest, it became everybody's duty to read the Word of God, and what Wycliffe had in vain attempted to do — to place the English Bible in the hands of the people — was now accomplished by the bold and pious English Protestants who were inspired in their work by Luther's noble example. The history of the English Bible Translations which had begun with Wycliffe may now be traced to the Authorised Version which is at this moment the sacred book of the entire English race. The Bible and the wide-spread knowledge of Latin and the reading of classical authors cooperated in bringing about an enormous invasion of Latin words, perhaps greater and more important than the invasion of French words at the times of the Normans. It is true that the great translators of the Bible consulted the Greek and Hebrew originals, but as the Vulgate, i. e. the Latin version of the Holy Scriptures, lay always on the table of the translators, it is no wonder that they adopted and anglicised as many of the Latin words as the scholars did who translated the great Roman poets and historians. Such words as perdition, consolation, reconciliation, sanctification, immortality, frustrate, excusable, transfigure, and innumerable others plainly show their origin.

The first of the great translators of the English Reformers is **William Tyndale** born about 1479; a clergyman of great piety and learning, who suffered such persecution that he retired to Germany in 1523. Here he visited Luther who encouraged him in his great task of translating the Bible from the original. The translation of the New Testament appeared at Antwerp in 1526, that of the Pentateuch in 1530. But at the instigation

of Henry VIII, who had just earned from the Pope the title of the defender of the faith, he was arrested by the Inquisition and strangled at the stake in 1536.

THE MAGNIFICAT.

And Mary sayde: My soule magnifieth the Lorde, and my sprete reioyseth in God my Savioure.

For he hath loked on the povre degre off his honde mayden. Beholde now from hens forth shall all generacions call me blessed.

For he that is myghty hath done to me greate thinges, and blessed ys his name:

And hys mercy is always on them that feare him thorow oute all generacions.

He hath shewed strengthe with his arme; he hath scattered them that are proude in the ymaginacion of their hertes.

He hath putt doune the myghty from their seates, and hath exalted them of lowe degre.

He hath filled the hongry with goode thinges, and hath sent away the ryche empty.

He hath remembred mercy, and hath holpen his servaunt Israel.

Even as he promised to oure fathers, Abraham and to his seed for ever.

The second translation was made by **Miles Coverdale**; he translated the whole Bible from the Vulgate and from Luther's German rendering.

The third, most important, publication was **Cranmer's Bible** in 1539, which was based on the Hebrew and Greek texts. From its size this famous book was called **the Great Bible**; it was this Bible which the king after long hesitation permitted at last to be read in the churches, where a copy was fastened by a chain to a pillar, as is still to be seen in some old churches of England. Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, was the ruling spirit of the English reformation under Henry and under Edward VI; to him the English owe the substance of the noble and beautiful book which along with the Bible found and finds its way into every English home to this day: The Book of Common Prayer. The author became the most distinguished victim of the persecutions of Bloody Mary. The Martyrs' Memorial in St. Giles's, Oxford, marks the spot where Cranmer died at the stake.

A revised version of Cranmer's Bible appeared in 1560 at Geneva; as the revisor was greatly influenced by the exiled English Protestants who collected around Calvin, this version was favoured by the Puritans in England it was called **the Geneva Bible**. The consequence was that clergymen

of the Episcopal Church published in 1568 another version, called **the Bishops' Bible**. To fix the text definitely King James appointed a committee of 46 scholars and churchmen who accomplished their task most carefully and successfully with a pious regard for the preceding translations. This is the origin of the **Authorised Version** which appeared in 1611 and is — after 300 years — in daily use in all the churches and schools, and house-holds in England and its colonies.

SPECIMEN FROM THE AUTHORISED VERSION.

P s a l m XC.

1. Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.
2. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.
3. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.
4. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past and as a watch in the night.
5. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep; in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.
6. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down and withereth.
7. For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.
8. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.
9. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.
10. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they are fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off and we fly away.
11. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.
12. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.
13. Return, o Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.
14. O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
15. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.
16. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.
17. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea the work of our hands establish thou it.

The Elizabethan Age.

Lyric and Epic Poetry of the 16th century.

The influence of the Renaissance and of Italian poetry, as prevalent in England in the 16th century as French literature was at the time of Louis XIV and of Voltaire, is clearly perceptible in the English poets, both with regard to their subjects as also to form and style: poetical figures, metaphors, allusions, quotations, and metre. The gods of Greece and the heroes and statesmen of Rome are to those poets and their public a living reality, not musty pedantry. But with the classicism of the time was blended and interwoven the romantic spirit of chivalry; in fact the heroic character of the wars of the 16th century against Turks and Infidels and the example of the marvellous adventures and exploits of the conquerors of India and America produced a new race of knights *sans peur et sans reproche* like Bayard, such as Sidney and Raleigh and a revival of the romances of Mediaeval Poetry, a glorious resuscitation of chivalry whose deathblow was dealt by Cervantes in his cruel satire of Don Quixote. The collection of the legend of King Arthur in the prose narration of Sir Thomas Malory called *La Morte d'Arthur*, which was one of the first books printed by Caxton at Westminster in 1485, became one of the most important sources of poetical inspiration, as important as Virgil's *Aeneid* and the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid.

The two most eminent lyric poets of the first half of the 16th century are Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey; both had travelled in Italy when renaissance culture was at its height and had imbibed a passionate love of Italian poetry; they were the first who introduced the sonnet in England, where it remained the favourite lyric verse for more than a century.

Sir Thomas Wyatt

was born about 1503, son of an eminent statesman under Henry VII and Henry VIII. Though he was suspected of loving Anne Boleyn, he succeeded — with two short intervals of disgrace and imprisonment — in retaining the favour of the capricious tyrant and died in his service in 1542. His poetry is distinguished by a manly and independent spirit and true and unaffected feeling. The famous poem in which he defies the judgment of the world, begins with the splendid verse:

I am as I am, and so will I be;
But how that I am, none knoweth truly,
Be it ill, be it well, be I bond, be I free,
I am, as I am, and so will I be.

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey,

owes his fame partly to his romantic and tragic fate. He was born in 1516 as the eldest son of the Duke of Norfolk, the first peer of the realm. He distinguished himself in the king's wars and was reputed the mirror of chivalry by his contemporaries. But when Henry VIII grew old, his suspicion was roused against him by the Earl of Hertford, who coveted the protectorship of Prince Edward in the event of the King's death. Surrey and his father were arrested on the most flimsy pretext and Surrey was executed, whilst his father, the Duke of Norfolk, was saved by the fact of the King's dying a day before the execution was to take place. Surrey was thus the last victim of the tyrant.

Surrey was deeply versed in Italian literature; his sonnets show a perfection which remind us of his model, Petrarch. As the Italian poet immortalised his Laura in his rhymes, Surrey celebrated his Geraldine whose identity is as uncertain as that of the young nobleman to whom Shakespeare's sonnets are addressed. From Italy too Surrey borrowed the metre, which was destined to play a great part in the poetry of England and of Germany, Blank Verse, the line of five Iambics dispensing with rhyme. This verse he used in his translation of the second and fourth books of Virgil, the same which Schiller translated into stanzas, the second containing the story of the fall of Troy, told by Aeneas to the Queen of Carthage, and the fourth narrating the love and desertion of Dido. The chief merit of Surrey lies no doubt in the art with which he polished and perfected the English language.

SONNET ON SPRING.

The soote¹ season, that bud and bloom forth brings,
With green hath clad the hill and eke² the vale.
The nightingale with feathers new she sings;
The turtle to her mate hath told her tale.

Summer is come, for every spray now springs;
The hart³ hath hung his old head⁴ on the pale⁵,
The buck in brake⁶ his winter coat he flings;
The fishes flete⁷ with new repaired scale;

The adder all her slough⁸ away she flings;
The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale⁹;
The busy bee her honey now she mings¹⁰;

¹ sweet. ² also. ³ stag. ⁴ antlers. ⁵ tree. ⁶ thicket. ⁷ swim.
⁸ skin. ⁹ small. ¹⁰ mixes.

Winter is worn that was the flowers bale¹,
And thus I see among these pleasant things
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs.

Edmund Spenser.

The great poet of the Elizabethan period who reflected and combined in his work the three great inspiring movements of the time: Renaissance, Reformation, and Romanticism was Edmund Spenser, the greatest English poet since Chaucer. He was born in London in the year 1552, studied from 1569 to 1573, at the University of Cambridge, where he attained a deep and comprehensive knowledge of Greek and Latin antiquity. At the same time he loved and studied the old English poets, especially Chaucer. He took a passionate interest in the religious questions of the time, as an ardent champion of Protestantism, hating the Church of Rome with the intense passion of the Puritans. For him Elizabeth was indeed the defender of the faith against Jesuits and Inquisition, Philip of Spain and the Pope; and Mary Stuart he regarded in the light of the most dangerous enemy of true belief and national independence.

Nor did he neglect the severe study of philosophy; the influence of Aristotle may be traced throughout his *Faery Queen*, where we meet the Twelve Moral Virtues of the Greek philosopher with their crowning chief, Magnanimity, idealised in the forms of twelve Knights and King Arthur. In fact in contradistinction to Shakespeare, Spenser is hampered and weighed down by his heavy armour of learning, and his poetry like that of his famous contemporary, Torquato Tasso, suffered, because he was constantly overawed by the great models of antiquity, from whom he could not free himself.

Having been introduced to Sir Philip Sidney, one of the noblest of that brilliant company of heroes at the court of Elizabeth, he dedicated to him his pastoral poem the *Shepherd's Calendar* in 1579. In 1586 he obtained from Elizabeth the grant of an estate in Ireland, — Kilcolman Castle in the county of Cork. Here in this quiet retreat he wrote the first three books of the *Faery Queen* which he is reported to have read to his guest, Sir Walter Raleigh, the celebrated founder of the colony of Virginia. These three books were published in 1590 whereupon the Queen granted him a pension. In the year 1594 he married an Irish girl of great

¹ ruin.

beauty, an event which he immortalised in the most famous wedding-poem in the English language, his Epithalamium. In 1596 he published three more books of his great poem, the Faery Queen. But from this time forward Spenser was overwhelmed with misfortune. During the great Irish rebellion under Tyrone in 1598 his house was sacked and burnt by the rebels; one of his children perished in the flames; with the rest of his family the poet fled to England and died poor and disheartened near Westminster in 1599. He was buried in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey near his great predecessor Geoffrey Chaucer.

The Faery Queen

is a great Epic Poem intended to delineate the ideal of chivalry and at the same time the ideal Man and Gentleman of the age of Queen Elizabeth. Spenser chose the legendary King of the Celtic race, that same race from which the ancestor of the reigning family sprung, Sir Owen Tudor, whose son, Henry VII, wishing to emphasize his origin, called his eldest son and heir to the English crown Arthur, Prince of Wales, — just as Godfrey, duke of Normandy, eldest son of Henry II, the contemporary of the first revival of the Arthurian legend, had called his eldest son and presumptive heir to the crown, Arthur; but neither of these Arthurs succeeded to the throne, and England still waits for a King bearing that great name, though the Arthurian legend has meanwhile celebrated its third revival in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*.

Spenser's work was to consist of 12 books, each devoted to the exploits of a knight achieved in honour of the Faery Queen Gloriana. In each book Arthur was to appear at the critical moment, helping his knight by counsel and deed to win the victory. He himself was at last to be rewarded with the hand of Gloriana, an event fraught with high promise for the future greatness of England. But we know already that only six books were published, and so the work is unfinished like the *Canterbury Tales*. But incomplete as it is, the Faery Queen is one of the longest epic poems and if it were finished, the sight of those 12 books might perhaps be discouraging to the impatient reader, for indeed of epic poems the Greek saying holds true that often the half is more than the whole.

The most important characteristic feature and drawback of the Faery Queen is its delight in allegory, — as Milton says of it *where more is meant than meets the ear*. For a double allegory underlies the whole

conception. In the first place those knights are not real individual human beings but abstractions, twelve Moral Virtues: Holiness, Temperance, Chastity, Friendship, Justice, Courtesy etc.; and Arthur is the sum and epitome of all the virtues, Magnificence; whilst Queen Gloriana represents sublime glory as the aim and end of a Man's life; so that the problem worked out in the poem is : is it possible for Man to attain the highest aim of life, to win what Faust calls „der Menschheit Krone? Can the Ideal be realised on earth? We may at once add that Spenser answers the question in the affirmative in contradistinction to his successor of the 19th century.

The second allegory, intertwined with the first, was certainly more interesting to the contemporary reader as it placed him in the midst of the great struggle between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant factions, taking place at that time. It will be easily understood that for Spenser this meant a struggle between light and darkness, between the genii of Good and Evil. The Faery Land in which the great contest takes place, is of course England; the Faery Queen in whose service the romantic knights display their prowess, is Elizabeth; the mirror of all chivalry who combines in himself all the virtues, is her great favourite, the Earl of Leicester, however the original may have fallen short of his poetical counterpart. The first book, which is undoubtedly the most interesting, introduces the Red Cross Knight, St. George of merry England — the typical Englishman himself — at present engaged in a dangerous adventure against a dragon *terrible and stearne* which had laid waste the land and had oppressed the royal parents of the lovely lady Una, who, clad in a shining white garment, which she has however covered with a black stole, rides by the side of the Red Cross Knight. This lady Una is of course the genius of Truth, whose country is usurped by the terrible dragon of the Romish Church; but the Red Cross Knight, the representation of the English Episcopalian Church, will right her cause and restore to her paternal inheritance. The great auxiliaries of the Roman Dragon are False Duessa who, to hide her true character calls herself Fidessa. By magic spells she has assumed the appearance of great beauty and is bedecked with jewels and rich ornaments *which her lavish lovers to her gave*, also the Terrible Giant Orgoglio who succeeds for some time in overcoming the Red Cross Knight and throws him into the dungeon of his castle where he is at death's door when Arthur himself comes to the rescue; kills Orgoglio, sets the prisoner free, and puts Duessa to shame by stripping her of her gaudy apparel and disclosing her real hideousness.

That Duessa is none other but Mary Stuart, as the Puritan saw her, that the Giant Orgoglio is Philip of Spain who during the reign of his wife, Bloody Mary, held England bound and captif *in durance vile* was easily understood and appreciated by the contemporary reader.

But what heightened the interest of the poem for Elizabethan readers, the countless allusions to contemporary events in the great social, religious, and political struggle of the time, naturally lessens it now that these events and the characters thus allegorically represented have been well nigh forgotten. This circumstance and the learned pedantry of the author who could not refrain from imitating the classical authors of Greece and Rome and Modern Italy, have been injurious to the popularity of the poet in later times. But what proved to be most dangerous to his lasting fame, was his language. In his picturing the romantic past Spenser affects an archaic style which was felt as such in his own time. He uses the words and grammatical forms of a disappearing society, nay sometimes those of provincial dialects in which the old Saxon language or the earlier forms of words of French origin had been preserved. A contemporary poet, Daniel, referred to him in his 111th sonnet in these terms:

Let others sing of knights and palladines
In aged accents and untimely words.

This intentional predilection for a language and a form that were fast getting obsolete, could not but have a disastrous effect on the popularity of the author. He was soon forgotten by the masses; whilst he remained the favourite poet of a small circle of highly gifted men who had patience enough to seek under the rugged shell the sweet kernel of true poetry. For he is a great poet after all. His greatness lies in his art of telling a story and in his wonderful descriptions. He is a great painter representing scenes of fairylike beauty. A golden haze hangs over his landscapes, mellowing the bright colours and removing what is near into a softening distance. There is the same dreamy indistinctness in his pictures as in the wonderful landscapes of Turner; and his human figures pass through the fairy scene like flitting spirits of shining radiance or darkest gloom, uncertain of outline, but leaving on the imagination a strong impression of alternating light and shade. Such poetry requires of the reader a strong imaginative faculty and can only be duly appreciated by a congenial spirit. So he has not unjustly been called the Poets' Poet.

The following stanzas from the first canto of the first book, which describe the Wood of Error where the Red Cross Knight and Lady Una

lose themselves during a thunderstorm, may serve as an example of Spenser's style and language.

Enforst to seeke some covert nigh at hand,
A shadie grove not farr away they spide¹,
That promist ayde² the tempest to withstand:
Whose loftie trees yclad³ with sommers pride
Did spred so broad, that⁴ heavens light did hide,
Not perceable with power of any starre:
And all within were pathes and alleies wide,
With footing worne, and leading inward farre:
Faire harbour that them seems; so in they entred arre.

And foorth they passe, with pleasure forward led,
Joying to heare the birdes sweete harmony,
Which therein shrouded from the tempest dred,
Seemd in their song to scorne the cruell sky.
Much can they praise the trese so straight and hy⁵,
The sayling pine, the cedar proud and tall,
The vine-prop elme⁶, the poplar never dry,
The builder oake, sole king of forrests all,
The aspine good for stav es, the cypresse funerall,

The laurell, meed⁷ of mightie conquerors
And poets sage, the firre that weepeth still,
The willow worne of⁸ forlorne paramours⁹,
The eugh¹⁰ obedient to the benders will,
The birch for shaftes, the sallow for the mill,
The mirrhe sweete bleeding in the bitter wound,
The warlike beech, the ash for nothing ill,
The fruitful olive, and the platane round,
The carver holme¹¹, the maple seldom inward sound.

The Drama under Queen Elizabeth, King James, and Charles I.

The Miracle Plays and the Moralities were at the end of the Middle Ages on the point of developing into Tragedy and Comedy, in consequence of dramatic treatment similar to that of the Miracle Plays to personages and passages of profane history, and similar to that of the Moralities to actual types of contemporary life. But at this moment the Renaissance

¹ espied. ² said. ³ clothed. ⁴ that they. ⁵ high. ⁶ the elm round
which the vine twines itself. ⁷ reward. ⁸ by. ⁹ lovers. ¹⁰ yew (Eibe).
¹¹ holm-oak (Steineiche).

set in and revealed to the English people the regular drama of the Ancients and the secrets of dramatic art, whilst the study of Greek and Roman history opened up the glorious past of the human race, crowded with great and interesting characters and grand and tragic events. Italy was the first European country which profited by the study of ancient history, art, and poetry; from Italy the new light spread over the West of Europe. The Italian language was learned everywhere, Italian novels were read, Italian plays were translated and performed along with those of ancient Rome, nay in 1578 we find a band of Italian actors established in London.

At the same time the movement of the Reformation awakened the interest in and quickened the understanding of the English Past. The Reformation was the result of the spirit of historical criticism provoked by the abuses of the Roman Church. This historical criticism engendered a curiosity concerning the past in general and induced men to ransack the old chronicles where they found on every page of the history of England dramatic events and grand and tragic characters. The Reformers looked into the past to show there the encroaching policy, the greed and tyranny of Rome. The Tudor Kings favoured the study of English history which showed from what fearful civil dissensions and national calamities they had delivered the nation. Thus arose the English historical drama, a sort of practical lesson to the people, a kind of historical morality; it was called

Chronicle History.

A famous example of the Chronicle History is *King John* by Bishop Bale. The piece was written during the reign of Edward VI when the Calvinistic reformers were victorious in England. King John appears here as the champion of the national cause against Popery. The play still abounds in the abstractions of the Morality, e. g. Nobility, Clergy, Civil Order etc.

During the reign of Bloody Mary liberty of utterance was suppressed, but the classical studies were a neutral ground and were allowed to continue. It is the time when countless translations of Latin authors were published; the beauty and majesty of the Greek stage was as yet unknown; for the time and in fact for another century Seneca's tragedies were considered the perfect model of the classic drama. The bombast and exaggeration of his style, the horrors and crimes in the representation of which he delighted, largely influenced the drama of the Renaissance in England.

The first regular English drama *Gorboduc* by Thomas Sackville in 1562 is composed after this model. It represents the hatred and deadly feud of two brother princes, Ferrex and Porrex, sons of King Gorboduc, — an imitation of Seneca's *Thebais*. It is divided into five acts, a chorus is introduced at the end of each of them; it is the first English play written in Blank Verse which as we saw, Surrey had just borrowed from Italy. The adoption of this metre which is wonderfully adapted to express rapid thought and action in a natural manner, unhampered by the trammels of rhyme and by the terrible caesura of the Alexandrine, powerfully influenced the growth and free development of the English drama. But almost thirty years were to pass before a poet could venture to use this metre on the public stage (1590 Marlowe in his *Tamburlaine*).

During the middle of the century *Comedy* too developed itself by breaking the chains of the Moralities.

John Heywood, a favourite author of Henry VIII and of Bloody Mary, wrote *Interludes*, short farcical plays to be performed in the intervals of court entertainments, the plots of which were very simple, but often very amusing, as in his *Four P's* (1540), when a Palmer, a Pardoner, a Poticary, and a Pedlar have a discussion about their professions, each of them claiming precedence for his own, in the great art of lying. They agree to decide the question on the spot by outbidding each other in lying in the stories they tell. Accidentally the Palmer declares that he never in his life saw a woman out of patience, when his three friends, being taken off their guard, unanimously exclaim that this was the biggest lie they had ever heard in their lives.

The earliest *regular comedy* is a kind of adaptation of the *Swaggering Soldier* by Plautus. It is called *Ralph Roister Doister* by Udall, provost of Eton College (1551). It is the first English comedy of manners reflecting the state of contemporary middle-class society, as Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor* reflect the manners of middle class society in a country town 50 years later at the end of the century.

Under such auspices

the Reign of Queen Elizabeth

opened. This was the time of the great Papal Reaction all over Europe, when the work of the Reformation was threatened by the alliance of the Pope and the Jesuits with Philip of Spain and the Catholic League in France. Though the ill-starred marriage of Bloody Mary with the King of Spain, her persecution of the Protestants, and the loss of Calais had

for ever ruined the Catholic cause in England, so that at the death of Mary the whole people rallied enthusiastically round Elizabeth, the young queen soon found herself attacked on all sides. In France the Night of St. Bartholomew seemed to give the death-stroke to the Huguenots; in the Netherlands Alba burnt eighteen thousand heretics, and hundreds of thousands fled in despair from a country where religious and political independence seemed to be doomed. At the same time Mary Stuart, a devout Romanist, a Guise by birth and sympathy, ascended the throne of Scotland; when Queen of France she had assumed the royal arms of England, thus denying the right of Elizabeth to the crown. Mary's quarrel with her people forced her to take refuge with her rival, but she continued, even in an English prison, to be a most dangerous adversary. The country was swarming with the emissaries of the Pope, of the Guises, of the King of Spain, to stir up rebellion, to breed dissension, to hatch plots and conspiracies. Thus Elizabeth's position was very precarious: open enemies abroad, secret enemies at home; in fact her throne and her life were constantly threatened. A merciless war was waged on every side, Protestants died by thousands on battlefields, at the stake, under the tortures of the Inquisition, Protestant princes were assassinated by desperate fanatics. In consequence the temper of the English Protestants was embittered, the hard Calvinistic spirit spread in ever widening circles, taking the violent form of Puritanism, and the Puritans were not satisfied with half-measures, they clamoured for the life of Mary Stuart, the rallying point of all the elements of strife and opposition. Woe to Elizabeth, if she did not obey the will of the people; already Republican doctrines began to be discussed among these stern Calvinists.

The year 1587 is the great crisis in the reign of Elizabeth. Three conspiracies had revealed the danger; abroad Antwerp had fallen into the hands of the Spaniards and in France the League was triumphing. Then at last Elizabeth resolved to bring her rival to the block.

The death of Mary Stuart left Elizabeth's subjects no choice; and when in the following year Philip hurled his Armada against England, the whole people — Episcopalians, Papists, Puritans — rallied around their Queen, knowing that they must conquer or be slaves of Spain and the Inquisition. This was indeed the supreme moment not only for England, but for the Protestant cause in all Europe. But '*afflavit Deus et dissipati sunt*', God's breath scattered the enemies of light and freedom to the winds and England was saved. As in Greece after the victory

of Salamis the Athenians took the offensive, attacked their foes on the seas, and conquered the isles and coasts of Asia, and founded an empire in which all the arts developed with astonishing rapidity, just so the energy of England, hitherto suppressed and restrained at home, burst forth and expanded. Her fleets swept the ocean, drove the Spanish galleons into their native ports, attacked the Spanish conquests in America, founded colonies, and carried the victorious banner of England round the globe.

And now the genius of England freed from fear, rejoicing in its victories, put forth its innate strength in the Arts of Peace, and the stirring time full of action and enterprise, productive of so many strongly marked individualities, reflected itself above all in the Drama. Queen Elizabeth was the genuine child of the Renaissance — bright and genial, vivacious, delighting in colour and brilliancy, fond of pleasure, highly accomplished, well versed in the learning, the arts, and the poetry of the past and of her own time. Her delight in dramatic entertainment was insatiable, and Law Schools, Colleges, Universities, the nobles and courtiers vied with each other to please her taste. The stirring age called for stirring themes, we may say: the style was the age. The audience required fulness and variety of matter, grandeur and novelty of subject, strong situations, strong characters.

The drama was closely allied with the stage; a book-drama did not exist, the drama was written for immediate performance for the wants of the moment. Nobody thought of printing, of reading it; it was intended to be seen, to strike and to fascinate, and then to make room for a new one. The author was generally an actor, hence his knowledge of stage effects.

The productivity of those twenty years which followed the overthrow of the Armada is simply marvellous; thousands of pieces were performed most of which are lost for ever. **The Stage** had become a popular institution in spite of the rising opposition of the strict Puritans who were strong enough in the City Council to be able to hinder the erection of theatres in the City itself. The consequence was that they were erected just outside the City Jurisdiction, on the confines of the inner-town and the suburbs. The first band of professional actors were the Servants of the Earl of Leicester who were in 1574 licensed to play in London. In 1576 James Burbage founded in the precincts of Black Friars a theatre which took its name from the ancient site. In 1583 the Queen's Players were allowed to play in public. Within 10 years 9 Theatres

arose, but for a time the opposition of the City Authorities was strong enough to shut them. After 1594 there were only two great rival companies: The Lord Chamberlain's and the Lord Admiral's; the former of these founded in 1596 the Globe Theatre, of which Burbage and Shakespeare were actors and shareholders. This theatre which Queen Bess frequented was constructed of wood, of a circular form like a big tower, open to the weather except over the stage and over the gallery which went round the building, stage and gallery being covered with a thatched roof. The cavaliers and ladies sat in boxes below the gallery, many young gallants, however, preferred to be accommodated with stools on the stage itself. The middle and lower classes were crowded in the pit standing or squatting, as there were no seats. The scenery was as simple as possible; historical accuracy of costume and decoration was unknown. Actresses did not appear on the stage before the return of the Stuarts in 1660; the female parts were played by boys or delicate looking youths. The ladies who came to see did not wish to be seen and wore masks, except Her Majesty. At the end of each performance the actors came forward and knelt down in front of the stage and prayed for the Queen.

The great dramatic movement continued till the civil war, when the theatres were closed by the Puritans. We may distinguish three periods, 1. the gradual rise of the flood under the predecessors of Shakespeare — 2. the high tide — represented by Shakespeare and Ben Jonson — 3. the gradual subsidence and ebbing away of the movement — under the successors of Shakespeare.

Predecessors of Shakespeare.

The younger contemporaries of Shakespeare had an advantage over him, that of a university education coupled with a certain amount of classical scholarship. All of them lived by their wits and led as actors and as writers for the stage a hand-to-mouth existence, revelling to-day with boon companions in taverns and gaminghouses, starving to-morrow in extreme distress, leading in fact a life of reckless dissipation and miserable Bohemianism. The most respectable of them was

John Lyly (1554 to 1606)

whose lasting celebrity rests on his novels *Euphues* and *Euphues and his England* in which he wishes to analyse the character and formation of the

true gentleman. The style in which he wrote, henceforth and for all times called Euphuism, became the rage of the court and affected literature to such a degree that even Shakespeare did not altogether escape the infection, although he ridiculed it in the extravagancies of the Spanish nobleman Don Adriano de Armado in his *Love's Labour's Lost*. Garnett and Gosse define it as the endeavour to gain attention for ordinary matter by extraordinary manner; it is the attempt constantly to refine upon ordinary expression. The chief characteristic of Euphuism is the building of the nicely balanced and carefully cadenced sentence, a piece of literary architecture adorned with antithetical alliterations and with assonances of every kind, as for instance when he says: "Hard is the choice, when one is compelled either by silence to die with grief or by speaking to live with shame." Besides Lyly makes a great display of classical learning and many metaphors and similes are taken from the works of the ancients. He too has the English taste for allegory and frequently hints at some hidden meaning. Another curious feature of his style is what has been called his unnatural natural philosophy in which he presumes the existence of certain animals, vegetables, and minerals with peculiar properties only to afford similes and illustrations. Yet the English language is much indebted to him, as he is one of the first conscious artists in English prose.

He was the first dramatist who wrote his plays in prose. We admire the natural and spirited dialogue carried on in his dramas, for instance in his *Campaspe* (1584) where Alexander is represented as having fallen in love with his fair Theban prisoner. He wishes to possess her picture and asks Apelles to paint her likeness. So Campaspe sits to him and the painter and his lovely model fall in love with one another. We fear a tragical development, but Alexander is magnanimous enough to resign, declaring that he will henceforth woo only one lady — glory. The sparkling dialogue is now and then interrupted with charming songs, like the following ditty sung by Apelles:

Cupid and my Campaspe play'd
 At cards for kisses, Cupid paid;
 He stakes his quiver, bow, and arrows,
 His mother's doves, and team of sparrows;
 Loses them too, then down he throws
 The coral of his lip, the rose
 Growing on's cheek (but none knows how),
 With these, the crystal of his brow,
 And then the dimple of his chin:
 All these did my Campaspe win.

At last he set her both his eyes;
 She won, and Cupid blind did rise.
 O Love, has she done this to thee,
 What shall, alas! become of me!

George Peele (1558 to 1598)

wrote a Masque 'the Arraignment of Paris' in 1584 with which the Queen was much pleased. Paris is brought into court for having given the apple to Venus in a grove sacred to Diana. In fact the virgin goddess claims the apple for a gracious nymph 'whose name Eliza is', — so the whole ends in a pretty compliment addressed to the Maiden Queen (then 52 years of age).

In 1593 he wrote a Chronicle History, Edward I. In his drama 'The Battle of Alcazar' he ventured to represent an event of contemporary history, the great battle of 1578 in which King Sebastian of Portugal was defeated and killed by the Moors. In the Biblical drama 'David and Bethsabe' he produced the tragedy of the rebellion and death of Absalom.

Robert Greene (1550 to 1592).

Greene's best known drama is the Honourable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay. The drama plays at Oxford in the 13th century when the half legendary scholar Bacon was the honour and pride of Brasenose College in Oxford. Here he and his colleague Bungay are great magicians. King Henry III comes with the Emperor of Germany to try their skill; they bring with them a great German sorcerer, Vandermast. At the trial of strength between the magicians the German defeats Bungay, but is defeated by Bacon who orders his spirit to carry him by force back to Germany. In the following passage the two princes instigate the scholars, representing the learning of their countries, to this trial of strength.

Emperor.	Trust me, Plantagenet, these Oxford schools Are richly seated near the river-side; The mountains full of fat and fallow deer, The battling ¹ pastures lade with kine ² and flocks, The town gorgeous with high-built colleges, And scholars seemly in their grave attire, Learned in searching principles of art, — What is thy judgment Jaques Vandermast?
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¹ battening, fattening. ² cows.

- Vandermast. That lordly are the buildings of the town,
 Spacious the rooms and full of pleasant walks;
 But for the doctors, how that they be learned,
 It may be meanly, for aught I can hear.
- Bungay. I tell thee, German, Hapsburg holds none such,
 None read so deep as Oxenford contains.
 There are in our academic state
 Men that may lecture it in Germany
 To all the doctors of your Belgic schools.
- King Henry. Stand to him, Bungay, charm this Vandermast,
 And I will use thee as a royal King.

In the ensuing contest in magic the German scholar is of course worsted. But the chief charm of this drama lies in the episode of the love story of fair Margaret of Tressingham, the forester's daughter who refuses the hand of Prince Edward — afterwards Edward I — having lost her heart to Lacy, the young Earl of Lincoln whom the prince had sent to her with messages of love.

Christopher Marlowe (1564—1592),

the greatest of the rivals of Shakespeare and the wildest of these 'Kraft-genies' as they would have been called at the time of Goethe's youth, of Lenz, and Klinger. He perished in a common tavern-brawl at the age of 29. In passion and pathetic power he rivals Shakespeare but he lacks the wisdom and moderation, the insight into human nature, the sweetness and above all the humour which characterise his greater contemporary.

In Tamburlaine the Great he draws a forcible picture of vaulting ambition that overleaps itself, he represents the greed of power. In this play he took the bold step of introducing Blank Verse on the Public Stage (1590), but dispensing with the rhyme he thought it necessary to make up for the loss by using a ranting pathos which, on various occasions, was quizzed by Shakespeare as in the extravagancies of Pistol in Henry IV and in the recitation of the actor in Hamlet.

In the Tragical History of Dr. Faustus Marlowe tried to represent the thirst for knowledge and the greed of that power which results from its possession. But Faust's craving for knowledge is here merely idle and childish, Faust's yearning to do and to dare and to enjoy all the forces and energies of life is but a coarse delight in sensual pleasure. Only when all hope is lost and Eternal Damnation stares him in the face, does Marlowe's Faustus find deep and harrowing accents of despair, and the drama ends with a scene of powerful soul-painting.

The Jew of Malta represents the greed of money and of the power it gives. The coarseness and ferocity displayed in this play serve as a foil to the art of Shakespeare in the creation of Shylock.

By far the best play of this author and the best altogether before Shakespeare is Marlowe's Edward II, a development of the Chronicle History into a great historical drama. The worst fault of a ruler is weakness, it destroys himself and ruins his cause: this lesson is powerfully enforced in the representation of the tragic end of amiable but unstable and weak Edward. Some scenes, as when his arrogant barons wrangle with each other and bully their king are equal to similar scenes in Richard II to which play Marlowe's drama bears more than a superficial resemblance.

As a specimen of Marlowe's style I quote the last scene of the play. Mortimer, the lover of Queen Isabella, wife of Edward II, has with her knowledge, caused the King to be assassinated. The boy-king Edward III, whom they despised, shows himself at once a man and sends Mortimer to his death.

Mortimer. Base Fortune, now I see that in thy wheel
 There is a point, to which when men aspire,
 They tumble headlong down: that point I touch'd,
 And, seeing there was no place to mount up higher,
 Why should I grieve at my declining fall?
 Farewell, fair queen, weep not for Mortimer,
 That scorns the world, and, as a traveller,
 Goes to discover countries yet unknown.

King Edward III. What! suffer you the traitor to delay?

(Exit Mortimer.)

Queen Isabella. As thou receivedst thy life from me,
 Spill not the blood of gentle Mortimer!

King Edward III. This argues that you spilt my father's blood
 Else would you not entreat for Mortimer.

Queen Isabella. I spill his blood? no!

King Edward III. Ay, Madam, you; for so the rumour runs.

Queen Isabella. That rumour is untrue: for loving thee
 Is this report rais'd on poor Isabel.

King Edward III. I do not think her so unnatural.

Second Lord. My lord, I fear me it will prove too true.

King Edward III. Mother, you are suspected for his death,
 And therefore we commit you to the Tower,
 Till further trial may be made thereof.
 If you be guilty, though I be your son,
 Think not to find me slack or pitiful.

Queen Isabella. Nay, to my death, for too long have I lived,
 Whereas my son thinks to abridge my days.

- King Edward III. Away with her! her words enforce these tears,
And I shall pity her if she speak again.
- Queen Isabella. Shall I not mourn for my beloved lord,
And with the rest accompany him to the grave?
- Second Lord. Thus, madam, 'tis the King's will you shall hence.
- Queen Isabella. He hath forgotten me; stay; I am his mother.
- Second Lord. That boots not; therefore, gentle madam, go.
- Queen Isabella. Then come, sweet death, and rid me of this grief.

Shakespeare.

The genius who, like a mirror, reflects all the features of that great period of English history which we call the Elizabethan Age, was William Shakespeare whose person and work, hardly appreciated at their full value during his life-time have been destined to endure and to wax in importance with the growing destinies of the English race. His name, then hardly known outside the narrow circle of London play-goers, is now a household word on the banks of the Ganges and the Mississippi, in lands unknown at his times such as Australia and the Cape.

The reason why the life of the greatest English poet is almost as little known as that of the greatest poet of antiquity, is due to the fact that the theatre was a little world apart, ignored beyond the circle of London society. Shakespeare almost disappeared behind the stage for which he wrote, his dramas being the property of the theatre and treated as such. Very few of them appeared in print during Shakespeare's lifetime and consequently they were not generally read. And unfortunately just when he was at the height of his power and fame as a poet, the Puritan opposition against the theatre became most formidable, and after Shakespeare's death it increased in bitterness, until at last the respectable middle-classes were estranged from the theatres and they were closed by the consent of the vast majority of the nation. When they were at last reopened after the Restoration of the Stuarts, times were changed; French taste prevailed at court and in the world of fashion, and continued to prevail during the pseudo-classic age of Dryden and Pope. And when Shakespeare was rediscovered in the middle of the 18th century, when a burst of admiration hailed Garrick's wonderful impersonations of Richard III and of Hamlet, and when universal curiosity was roused with regard to the great wizard who in the World of Fancy had wielded the conjurer's staff like his own Prospero, a century and a half had past since his death and very few reliable facts could be clearly severed from a mass of fiction.

William Shakespeare, whose very name is uncertain as to its spelling, was born at Stratford-on-Avon amidst the sweet rustic scenery of Warwickshire. He was christened — the date of his birth is unknown — on the 26th of April 1564. His father was a well-to-do farmer and tradesman and the boy received his education at the grammar-school of his native town. But he was not sent to a university and was not a scholar like Peele, Green, Marlowe, Ben Jonson etc. He was self-taught, gathering a vast amount of general information by using his marvellous power of observation and his natural intelligence. We know nothing about his profession, — to judge from his works he studied all of them. He must have been a rash and passionate youth, for we know from the marriage register that in 1582 he married — at the ripe age of 18 — a farmer's daughter Ann Hathaway, aged 26, by whom he had three children — Susanna in 1583, and the twins Judith and Hamnet in 1584. In the mean time his father seems to have suffered heavy losses, for young Shakespeare had to shift for himself in order to provide for his family. So he went up to London to try his fortune. Then we hear of him in connection with the Blackfriars' and afterwards with the Globe Theatre of which he became a shareholder. In striking contrast to his wild and reckless fellow dramatists he must have led a careful and respectable life, which no doubt contributed to assure his success. We find him on terms of intimacy with great noblemen and distinguished courtiers, — the Earl of Pembroke, the Earl of Southampton, and ill-starred Lord Essex. Spenser speaking of the dramatic authors of the time, mentions him with praise under a fictitious name:

And then, though last not least, is Aëtion,
A gentler shepherd nowhere to be found,
Whose muse, full of high thought's invention
Doth, like himself, heroically sound.

In fact the gentleness of his disposition emphasized here, is insisted upon by all those who speak of him, among others by his contemporary, friend and rival Ben Jonson.

Having won the golden opinions of the people of his time and through industry and thrift secured a competency, he left the scene of his triumphs at the, comparatively speaking, early age of 48 and withdrew to his native town where he had purchased a house and some land, hoping, no doubt, to spend a long golden autumn in dignified repose amidst the sweet scenery of his childhood and youth. But he died already on the 23rd of April 1616, possibly his 52nd birthday. His family died out in the 3rd generation.

The first works of Shakespeare, generally old dramas touched up and adapted to the taste of the time, did not show any marked difference from those of his contemporaries. In *Titus Andronicus* we find the same delight in violence, horrors, and monstrous crimes, the same turgid language and affectation that appear in the works of Greene and Marlowe, Though he finally rose high above them, Shakespeare was the son of his time. There is a class of worshippers who refuse to find a flaw in their jewel; such blind idolisation must lead to insincerity. Why not acknowledge that Shakespeare's pathos is sometimes hollow and inflated, that his style is frequently marred by phantastic quibbles and Euphuistic conceits, that the puns and jokes of his fools are often flat and unsavoury, that some passages betray the coarseness and indelicacy of the age in which the Maiden Queen cracked jokes of doubtful taste with her favourites, swore like a dragoon when thwarted, and boxed the ears of Essex in full court. Shakespeare can afford to be criticised, for what remains suffices to make him the greatest dramatic poet of the Teutonic Race.

Shakespeare's greatness does not lie in invention; the plots of his original dramas were nearly all of them borrowed from older plays, from novels and romances, from legendary tales. Boccaccio's *Decamerone* yields a fair crop. In his dramas on Roman history — *Coriolanus*, *Caesar*, *Anthony and Cleopatra* — he follows North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*, in those on English history his authority is Holinshed's *Chronicle*, where he also found the subject of *Macbeth*. He shows his genius in the manner in which he treats these subjects; he finds his materials lead, he turns them into pure gold.

Shakespeare came to London when the national crisis was at its height, and he threw himself ardently into the fray. In the intensity of the struggle with Spain his poetry became fervently national and patriotic. He uses the old form of the *Chronicle History* to put on the stage the history of England during those three eventful centuries which led to and prepared the age of Elizabeth. *King John's* struggle with France, with his barons, with the Pope, — the loss of Normandy, the origin of Magna Charta, the Interdict laid on the country, resulting from the weakness and wickedness of the ruler, opens the scene. Then follows the representation of the most fatal mistake of weakness in a ruler exemplified in *Richard II.* The two parts of *Henry IV* describe the troubles resulting from usurpation; the dark picture is relieved by the splendid contrast between Henry Hotspur and Harry, Prince of Wales, and by the merry scenes in which Sir John Falstaff is the central figure.

Henry V reveals the typical hero of England; the reckless, giddy youth suddenly, by the death-bed of his father, discovers his real nature and steps forward, to the surprise of all, as the great national hero who makes his people forget their dissensions in the great struggle with France for pure glory, — a hero but always humane, without any affectation, naïve and full of humour.

Then follows the great tetralogy of *Henry VI* Part 1, 2, 3 and *Richard III* passing in review that terrible English thirty years' war of the Roses, the fearful struggle for power between the rival houses of York and Lancaster surrounded by a proud and quarrelsome nobility. What types of Kings, gentle, peace-loving, weak Henry VI, whose lot is cast in such troubled times, and the wild beasts of the House of York, cruel, pleasure-loving, licentious Edward IV and the crafty hypocritical schemer and plotter, relentless in his hate, merciless, wading to the throne through the blood of infants, Richard III! What characters, what vicissitudes, what catastrophes, what pictures of human life! The great series is closed with the drama *Henry VIII*, where our interest is fixed on the rise and fall of the great cardinal. In all these dramas Shakespeare of course sides with the House of Lancaster and of the Tudors who sprang from it; though the historian of the present day takes a less partial view and does justice to the House of York, the public will forever see through the eyes of Shakespeare. As he made mistakes in regard to the past, in the same manner he undoubtedly misjudged the future. Living in a monarchical age among an aristocracy that had rallied with enthusiasm round a great ruler, he was a convinced royalist; he neither saw the full significance of Magna Charta and of Parliament, nor did he foresee the advent of the middle classes to power by means of the republican movement of Puritanism of which he only saw the ridiculous outside.

Also in his **Roman plays** we find him an aristocrat (in *Coriolanus*) and a royalist (in *Julius Caesar*), or rather he is above all heroic in the conception of his dramas: the greatness of the character of a central figure strikes and fascinates him. And here he reveals an extraordinary power of conceiving a living image of a period of history. The reason is that in history, also of the remote past, he sees and represents above all the essentially human elements, human character with its complexity of passions, and these are the same at all times. If he had been a greater scholar — like Ben Jonson — he would probably have been more accurate in the representation of accidental detail, but the real motive power in history lies in the nature of man, and this he knew. With the intuitive

glance of genius he lights up the age of Caesar in his great tragedy. Nations have the governments they deserve, — the Romans no longer deserve to be free, we see them as Tacitus says rush into slavery. How the mob rejoices over the death of Caesar whom they cheered the day before, and how they applaud Brutus! And one of them throws up his greasy cap and shouts: Let him be Caesar! How this one word lights up the whole situation! Brutus is undoubtedly the hero of the play; his part is eminently tragic: the generous, simple-minded man struggles and dies for a cause that is lost, the cause of liberty, a true Don Quixote of republicanism. By his side stands Cassius 'with the hungry look', a Republican from envy and bitter jealousy, incapable of being the first, unwilling to be the second. They kill the man who was born to rule, who alone was able to restrain the wild passions of that seething society and save it from itself, and already two candidates are ready to fill his place: Mark Antony, ambitious, clever, unscrupulous, passionate, but not without a trait of generosity; Octavianus crafty, subtle, cold. And over the prostrate bodies of the last republicans on the bloody field of Philippi we see these two men rejoicing in their victory, but we foresee fiercer and bloodier battles, Anthony overthrown and the monarchy established, not by Caesar, the warmhearted lion, but by the cold crafty fox Octavian.

But not only History, Human Life in general in its endless variety, is the theme of Shakespeare, the dark and the bright side of it in tragedy and comedy.

The greatness of his **Tragedies** is not to be sought in the interest of the plot, — he apparently attaches little importance to it — but in his masterly delineation of character. His knowledge of the human heart is wonderful; he traces a passion from its first stirrings through all the stages of its development up to the final catastrophe. It is love in *Romeo and Juliet*, jealousy in *Othello*, revenge in the *Merchant of Venice*. In these three plays we are in the Italy of his time, and who does not see it in his mind's eye such as the English poet created it? In *Romeo and Juliet* we are in the gaily crowded streets of Verona; troops of noblemen with their servants passing along in merry conversation to join some night-revelry or masquerade, when suddenly some chance word that falls rouses the old feud of rival houses; daggers flash, swords clash, and furious Tybalt or witty Mercutio lies weltering in his blood.

In the *Merchant of Venice* we are on The Rialto and watch the gondolas flitting across the grand canal; a gay throng passes along, music resounds,

a young gallant is serenading his lady-love, a dark-eyed Jewess, who is carried away as torchbearer to her sweetheart amidst a band of revellers. Life seems one eternal holiday. But in the distance we hear shouts of derisive laughter, the 'hep, hep' of a Christian mob, and Shylock rushes in, hooted by a band of boys, glaring at them, at Venice, at the World, with eyes revealing the revengeful hate pent up in the breast of the Jew.

And again we are in Venice, but this time in the grand hall of the Doge's palace. A solemn council of white-bearded senators is assembled around the illustrious chief of the Queen of the Adriatic, and before them stands old Brabantio denouncing in wild, passionate words the destroyer of his peace, yonder dark-faced warrior **Othello** to whose side clings like a fluttering dove lovely Desdemona. And now the great Moorish soldier tells his tale, how he won her, and his intrinsic worth, the lofty grandeur of his soul speaks in every word, and the Doge acquits him and sends him forth to fight the Turks.

In this manner Shakespeare creates what we now call 'the milieu', the atmosphere peculiar to the place, the age, the society in which his characters move. Wonderful is his art of setting off the passion he wishes to describe by contrast. In *Romeo and Juliet* love springs up suddenly, irresistibly on a soil sodden with the blood shed in an old inveterate family feud. On the dark background of hate and wild deeds, their love flashes up like a brilliant meteor. In *Othello* it is the feeling of this contrast of black and white and the inner consciousness that there is something unnatural in this union which makes the simple-witted warrior an easy prey to wily Iago. The idea that the handsome Cassio must indeed seem the fitter match for his lovely bride must of necessity breed jealousy in him, and once roused from his security the Numidian lion awakes, overleaps with one bound the barriers and fences of civilised society and destroys the victim of his passion with one stroke of his paw.

In striking contrast to these three plays of the warm south and its fierce passions of love, jealousy, and revenge stand the three great tragedies of the cold and misty north: **Macbeth**, **King Lear**, and **Hamlet**. How different the local colour! Here the wild Scottish moorland with its background of cloud-capt mountains, the meeting-place of those three witches, weird, misty, unearthly shapes of Northern fancy, flitting over the dusky heath to prophecy great things to the mighty warrior Macbeth who returns victorious from battle, to lure him on to crime and ruin. There old King Lear appears, out at night on the barren waste in the fury of the storm, baring his breast to the fiery darts that flash from

heaven. And there **Hamlet** is seen at midnight on the terrace of the Danish castle that overlooks the stormy sea. Through the clouds, rent and chased by the wind, the pale moon sends her trembling beams and throws her light on the white figure of the ghost of Hamlet's father who tells a tale befitting the hour, whilst the gusts of the wind bring to our ear now the hollow roar of the sea, now the music and the shouts of revelry from the usurper's castle. In harmony with the bleak and dreary scenery the poet shows us men of slow and sluggish nature, arguing, pondering, dreaming, who, when roused at last, display the wild energy of their passion which, once set in motion, cannot be checked until it has run its course. How marvellous in **Macbeth** the contrast between husband and wife, man and woman! The master passion of both is ambition; hers is the livelier, the more daring imagination. She plans the murder of the King, and brings her hesitating husband to the point by fiery eloquence, by taunts, and bitter irony. But when the deed is to be done, she shrinks from it; King Duncan in his sleep reminds her of her father; and when the deed is done, she swoons; and whenever new deeds of horror must be accomplished to secure the usurped throne, her courage fails her and her nerves break down; she walks in her sleep, she commits suicide. She is not ambitious for herself; she wishes to see the man she loves great, but he is hard to persuade; he is clogged and hampered by gratitude and loyalty and scruples. But once prevailed upon to make up his mind, he takes the great leap resolutely; he kills the King, his benefactor, he wades ankle-deep in blood to secure his crown, and he dies fighting desperately, even against fate.

Shakespeare's most interesting conceptions are perhaps those men who are characterised by a noble melancholy caused by their deep pity for the wretchedness of earthly existence. This his favourite character appears in his works in various stages of development. Antonio, the **Merchant of Venice**, who is sad he does not know why, who seems utterly careless of his own good or evil fortune and is roused from his melancholy and indifference only by his friendship for Bassanio, represents the first stage. **Melancholy Jacques**, the faithful courtier of fallen greatness in **As You Like it**, who accompanies the banished duke into the Forest of Arden, lies dreaming on the banks of the brook and discourses on the vanity of all things, may be adduced to represent the second stage. The fourth and the last stage is **Timon of Athens** who breaks away from the world in wild misanthropy. But the third and most interesting stage is represented by **Hamlet**, the poet's masterpiece.

There seem to be men (and nations) born to act, others born to think —. The former throw themselves boldly into the current of time, seize, appropriate whatever comes within their reach, enjoy what the moment offers, do what the occasion demands, — successful, practical men, men of the world, never hesitating, never troubled by reflection or scruple, irresistible. The latter pondering and tarrying for ever on the brink of the river of existence; speculating on the possible consequences of a resolution, they let slip the golden opportunity, the one favourable moment, and may find themselves suddenly caught in the whirling and eddying stream to be carried away to destruction, unable to achieve anything good for their kind, because they were too scrupulous as to the means of accomplishment. A man of such a nature will be a failure simply because he is too good for this world, the clay of which he is made proving too fine for the rough usage it receives daily.

Such is the character of Hamlet, this is the secret of his being, of the drama itself. He is, as Goethe says, like some costly vase made of the most delicate china, in which a seed has been laid of a plant of rapid and irresistible growth; the material of the vessel is too fine, too brittle to contain, to confine it; it is shattered because of its very excellency. The plant which destroys the vessel in the case of Hamlet, is the duty of revenge, enjoined upon the royal prince by the ghost of his murdered father, too heavy, too coarse, too awful a task for a heart of so tender a fibre, it breaks. But because he fails in his nearest duty how much mischief does he not occasion! the murder of Polonius, the madness and suicide of Ophelia, the corruption and death of Laërtes — all his fault! No doubt there is a tragical guilt in overscrupulousness, in oversensibility. Such men wish to live in a voluptuous dream-land of mental and moral perfection; but the world is a stern and rugged place and at the banquet of life as Goethe says:

Wir müssen ersticken oder verdauen.

Side by side with these dark and intensely tragic characters what ideals of female loveliness do we not find in Shakespeare's plays, of innocence, girlish playfulness, bright wit, maiden modesty, sweet fancy, deep and passionate tenderness, inexpressible charm! What poet-painter has produced a gallery of lovely, strongly marked female individualities to match his Cordelia, Desdemona, Portia, the wife of Brutus, Portia the bride of Bassanio, Juliet, Jessica, Rosalind, Miranda, Viola, Imogen!

It is difficult to say in which kind of dramatic poetry Shakespeare is

more admirable, in tragedy or **comedy**. It seems to be the rarer talent to be able to write a good comedy. Indeed comedy seems to require a higher order of genius, richer in experience, better balanced, surer of itself.

Das Spiel des Lebens sieht sich heiter an,
Wenn man den sichern Schatz im Herzen trägt.

No doubt Shakespeare possesses in a high degree the talent of wit, but this he shares with many men of inferior stamp; however the far higher gift of humour he owns in an infinitely higher degree, I mean that capacity of measuring the finite by the infinite, the manners and customs of the world, the deeds of men by the standard of the ideal and to laugh at the falling off, at the insufficiency of all human things, but with a tear of pity in the eye. And so he exhibits before us the motley and ridiculous picture of human life with all its follies and shortcomings, but with the wisdom of a loving heart, for to know everything is to forgive everything. In contradistinction from his dramas the interest of his comedies does not so much lie in the clever delineation of character, nor does he write a comedy of manners like Molière; — with the only exception of **the Merry Wives of Windsor**, his comedies have no country, play nowhere and therefore everywhere. The interest of his comedies rather lies in the plot itself, in the incident. They are distinguished by rapid movement, situations of irresistibly comical force, sparkling dialogue; and just because they do not present to us the foibles of the society of a certain time or of characters which are the growth of a certain soil, but give us human types detached from and independent of the categories of time and place, they are as fresh to-day as they were three hundred years ago, and such comedies as *What you will*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *As you like it*, *The Taming of the Shrew* find the public as grateful and delighted as in the Globe Theatre where Queen Bess gave the signal to applaud.

But besides these classes of dramatic composition Shakespeare has created a new one: **the Romantic Comedy**, where he walks paths untrodden before him, where he carries us entirely away from the realities of life, where he forces us to surrender ourselves altogether to his magic spell and to believe in the reality of the light gossamer threads out of which he weaves his wonderful plots. I mean those plays where we are altogether in a land of poetry as in *the Midsummer Night's Dream*, where we wander through the magic region of the moonlit forest, haunted by Elves and Fairies of marvellous reality; and in *the Tempest* where he conjures up an island in mid-ocean, inhabited by strange shapes, the

airiest and most fantastical and the heaviest and most earthy, swayed alike by the potent wizard Prospero who in his wisdom, his power, his mercy, seems indeed no other than the poet himself wielding the magic wand of divine imagination.

But as even Prospero must at last lay aside his conjurer's rod, Shakespeare too paid his tribute to mortality; but who would say that he died, he lives among us and in us and has enriched us perhaps to a far higher degree than we are aware of.

The genius of Shakespeare has dwarfed his contemporaries; they would be justified to complain bitterly of the injustice of fate and of posterity. The age produced nearly a dozen great dramatists, but it is only the student of literature who knows anything about them, and even he seems to study them chiefly to contrast them with his favourite and to show his superiority. It is a consolation to know that their own world treated them with greater fairness and gladly acknowledged and enjoyed the rich gifts they brought before their public.

The poet who in Shakespeare's later years shared his popularity and was considered his equal is

Ben Jonson,

one of the most characteristic figures in the whole gallery of English poets. If the contemporary world liked to call Shakespeare *gentle*, they loved to bestow on his rival another pleasing epithet, which he no doubt richly deserved; every one calls him 'honest', showing thereby faith in the integrity of his character as a man and in the conscientious industry of the poet. Shakespeare's portrait shows a slender and elegant frame, refined features, a clear-cut classical profile, a high forehead, large fiery eyes, every inch an aristocrat by nature. Ben Jonson is a heavy, powerful-looking, burly man, a plebeian in his appearance, also a plebeian in his tastes, hot-tempered and quarrelsome, but also good-natured and genial. In the Mermaid Tavern they met with Walter Raleigh and other congenial spirits. Here Ben Jonson rules supreme, laying down the law with his thundering voice amid peals of laughter. He quaffs his wine and wraps himself Jupiter-like in clouds of smoke. If there is a passage of arms between the great rivals, he seems to wield a heavy broad-sword, but lithe and supple Shakespeare evades the falling weapon and thrusts home dexterously with his quick and glittering foil. But both are gentlemen at heart, Ben as well as Will, and stand by one another without grudge or

envy. Shakespeare's horizon is infinitely wider: he is a patriotic Englishman, but he is also a citizen of the world; Ben Jonson is a Londoner. He is in a far higher degree than Shakespeare the local genius and perhaps for this reason more widely and more intimately known than his rival; even his foibles, his drinking bouts, his money difficulties, his literary quarrels, his manifold troubles brought about by his waywardness and obstinacy, endeared him to the masses. Shakespeare represents life in general in all its breadth, Ben Jonson only town-life; Shakespeare loves to paint the beauties of nature, Ben Jonson's subject is man alone. Fortunately for us and for himself Shakespeare is no scholar, he is not awed by the mighty shadows of ancient models, he acknowledges no model, he boldly strikes out his own path. Ben Jonson walks under a load of old-world lore, in a heavy armour of classical learning, and in the days of the Renaissance to know the ancients and to follow them was one and the same thing. Milton, a bright and intelligent school-boy when Shakespeare's sun was setting and Ben Jonson was in his zenith, contrasted them cleverly in his *l'Allegro*, saying that he likes to go to the theatre,

If Jonson's learned sock¹ be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native woodnotes wild.

Ben Jonson was born in London in 1573. His step-father was a bricklayer, but by a lucky chance he received a good education, being brought up in Westminster School at the expense of one of the masters whose interest he had won. It is uncertain whether he went to a university, but he certainly made up for this deficiency by an immense amount of reading and independent study. Not liking his father's profession, he ran away and joined the Dutch army to fight the Spaniards. Having returned to London without means of subsistence, he began to act and to write for the stage. In 1597 appeared his first great comedy '*Every Man in his Humour*', which was followed in 1599 by '*Every Man out of his Humour*'. The following play, '*Cynthia's Revels*' involved him in a desperate feud with some fellow poets, so that he resolved to renounce comedy. Turning then to the historical drama he brought out in 1603 his first drama on a Roman subject, *Sejanus*.

In the meantime Elizabeth had died and **James I** ascended the throne. It soon appeared that he was almost as fond of theatrical performances as

¹ soccus or *κόθαρνος*, the high-heeled boot of the ancient actor which made him appear higher than he was.

his predecessor; so there was a great demand for *masques*, which were represented by the ladies and gentlemen of the court and were distinguished by utmost magnificence of costume and scenery. They generally dealt with classical and allegorical subjects and were enlivened with music and dancing. The king, a learned pedant, was delighted with the allusions to ancient history and mythology, with the quotations from classical authors and the flattering compliments contained in the allegory. It is a curious fact that the bluff and coarse-grained poet excelled in this kind of poetry on which he lavished much learning but also much delicate and fanciful poetry in a language of wonderful elegance and beauty. So he was allowed for some time to bask in the sunshine of royal favour, but already in 1605 he got into serious trouble for having had a hand in the production of a play — *Eastward Hoe* — in which the character of the Scots, the king's hungry countrymen who had followed him to London, were held up to ridicule. Indeed he had a narrow escape from prison and the pillory.

Then he brought out his most celebrated plays: *Volpone* or the Fox 1605, *Catiline* 1611, *Bartholomew Fair* 1614. He was now the undisputed centre of literary London and of a merry company of actors, authors, and wild young noblemen. London Club Life was his element as much as it was that of his great namesake of the 18th century, Dr. Johnson. The last years of his life were overclouded probably through his own fault. He died in 1635 leaving among his papers a pastoral drama of great beauty: '*The Sad Shepherd*'. When he died all London followed his bier to Westminster Abbey; a stone bearing the inscription: O rare Ben Jonson! is still to be seen.

We may divide his dramas into tragedies, comedies, and *masques*. In all of them he is a conscientious student of the classical model, binding himself down to the strict observation of the three unities. His historical dramas, *Sejanus* and *Catiline*, give evidence of laborious research. *Sejanus* gives a powerful picture of the age of Tiberius, whose problematic character forms the most interesting feature of the play. In *Catiline* a powerful dramatic life is breathed into the heroes of Sallustius: the dreamy and imbecile Lentulus, the swaggering Cethegus, the fierce and inhuman Catiline, the clever, subtle, and patriotic Cicero; and then those masterpieces of delineation of character, the wanton Fulvia and the vain Sempronia, puffed up with her knowledge of Greek and her belief in woman's right to play a part in politics: an emancipated blue-stocking of Republican Rome. Hear her inveighing against Cicero as an upstart:

And we must glorify
 A mushroom, one of yesterday, a fine speaker
 'Cause he sucked at Athens! and advance him
 To our own loss! No Fulvia; there are they
 Can speak Greek too, if need were, Caesar and I
 Have sat upon him; so hath Crassus too,
 And others. We have all decreed his rest,
 For rising farther."

The 'Caesar and I' is inimitable. A grand piece of powerful declamation is the recital of the final catastrophe, the battle of Pistoja, where the conspirators were overthrown and died fighting hard to the last.

In his comedy *'Every Man in his Humour'* the poet struck a new vein in dramatic composition; he inaugurated in it on the English stage the comedy of character and of manners. He leads us into the streets and alleys of London and 'grasps into the thick of life'. The word humour was then much in vogue; he uses it after the manner of the Elizabethan poets applying it to oddities and novelties of conduct, fashion, or manner of every description, to some ruling peculiarity of character of the ridiculous kinds. Here we have the merchant Kitchy, who in his jealousy suspects every man of being his wife's lover. Here we have Brainworm, the valet of a rich citizen, Knowell, who in order to extract money from his master, disguises himself as a begging soldier, a sergeant of the law an usher etc. Here we see the boasting soldier Bobadil who falls on his knees at the sight of a naked sword; here we see his cousin Stephen who desires to be taken for a gentleman but has nothing of a gentleman about him except his oaths, not to mention a falcon which he does not know how to use. Here we have Mathews who is so stupid that he can only repeat what the others say; here the ill-humoured and grumbling Downright.

Volpone holds up the mirror to some of the darkest sides of the motley society that crowded the court of James I. The scene is laid at Venice, then the capital of the fashionable world of Europe. A villainous nobleman, Volpone, feigns himself sick to death in order to attract the gifts of his friends, whilst with the assistance of his parasite, Moscha, he persuades each of these fawning followers that he is to be his heir. A farcical element is brought in by a couple of English globe-trotters who already at that time seem to have served to amuse the people of the continent — Sir Politic Wouldbe and his talkative wife.

In *'The Alchemist'* the author makes the attempt through ridicule

to clear the stage of London life of a prolific race of impostors: astrologers, alchemists, magicians, and charlatans who speculated on the credulity of the public. Very often darker arts were mixed up with these innocent follies; many a life was cut off by poison sold by the alchemist to some impatient heir, ruined debtor, faithless wife. Such adventurers and their confederates in the art of cheating were pitted in this play against the greedy gulls Sir Epicure Mammon and some others among whom we find Tribulation Wholesome and his deacon, Ananias, 'of the separation'. These latter characters are a bitter satire on the Puritans whose strictness and hypocrisy were a constant threat to the theatres. They are mercilessly exposed and ridiculed in '*Bartholomew Fair*', from which Goethe took his idea of his *Jahrmarkt von Plundersweilen*. Here the scene is crowded with characters of life-like reality, so that the play is invaluable as a picture of the manners of the time.

In the *Masques* we admire above all Jonson's lyrical talent. His masques abound with tender sentiments and delicate and airy images. Here only, he, the assiduous haunter of all the resorts of London, gives us bright glimpses of woods and fields and rural life, which we miss in his dramas. The *Sad Shepherd* takes us right into Sherwood Forest among the merry men of Robin Hood, and we move with delight through the sunlit glades of the greenwood. In his *Masques* we find some of the prettiest songs of the English language.

To Celia.

(From *The Forest*.)

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
 And I will pledge with mine;
 Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
 And I'll not look for wine.
 The thirst that from the soul doth rise,
 Doth ask a drink divine;
 But might I of Jove's nectar sup.
 I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
 Not so much honouring thee,
 As giving it a hope that there
 It could not withered be.
 But thou thereon didst only breathe,
 And sent'st it back to me;
 Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
 Not of itself, but thee.

The Sweet Neglect.(From *The Silent Woman*.)

Still to be neat, still to be drest,
 As you were going to a feast;
 Still to be powdered, still perfumed:
 Lady, it is to be presumed,
 Though art's hid causes are not found,
 All is not sweet, all is not sound.
 Give me a look, give me a face,
 That makes simplicity a grace;
 Robes loosely flowing, hair as free;
 Such sweet neglect more taketh me
 Than all th' adulteries of art:
 They strike mine eyes, but not my heart.

Hymn to Diana.(From *Cynthia's Revels*.)

Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,
 Now the sun is laid to sleep;
 Seated in thy silver chair,
 State in wonted manner keep.
 Hesperus entreats thy light,
 Goddess excellently bright!

Earth, let not thy envious shade
 Dare itself to interpose;
 Cynthia's shining orb was made
 Heaven to clear when day did close;
 Bless us then with wished sight,
 Goddess excellently bright!

Lay thy bow of pearl apart,
 And thy crystal shining quiver.
 Give unto the flying hart¹
 Space to breathe, how short soever;
 Thou that mak'st a day of night,
 Goddess excellently bright!

Song.(From *The Forest*.)

Oh do not wanton with those eyes,
 Lest I be sick with seeing;
 Nor cast them down, but let them rise,
 Lest shame destroy their being.

¹ stag.

Oh be not angry with those fires,
 For then their threats will kill me;
 Nor look too kind on my desires,
 For then my hopes will spill¹ me.

Oh do not steep them in thy tears,
 For so will sorrow slay me;
 Nor spread them as distraught with fears;
 Mine own enough betray me.

The Successors of Shakespeare.

Among the dramatists who flourished in the reign of the first two Stuarts, James, 1603—1625, and Charles I, 1625 to 1649, the most important are the literary partners *Beaumont and Fletcher*, *John Webster*, *Philip Massinger*, *George Chapman*, *John Ford*, *James Shirley*. They are all masters of dramatic art with an instinctive knowledge of stage effect, for on the stage they are at home. They build up plots of astonishing variety. There is generally a main plot and an under-plot, dexterously interwoven with one another. They have a wonderful power of delineating character; they are most successful in describing the fierce passions of ambition, greed, and desire. A morbid love of the horrible and the sensational is to be found in all of them, but we also come across tender and touching passages of great beauty.

But when we examine the reverse of the medal we understand why this bloom was so ephemeral. Who would deny that we breathe a tainted air in these wonderful dramas; that we move among beings whose hearts and imaginations are poisoned, beings who have no great and worthy objects in life, no God, no country, no noble aim, no ideal? These men and women know no higher law than the gratification of their passions.

It is a characteristic fact that the scene generally lies in Italy, that the subject is taken from Italian novels or memoirs, and generally from court life. We inhale the stifling air of a hot-house where evil passions like plants attain prodigious growth. It is some clever, skilfully conducted intrigue that fixes our attention, not the wide interests of humanity or moral problems of general importance.

A very different spirit had breathed in Shakespeare's dramas. There every human interest is stirred. A great and healthy life throbs in his

¹ destroy.

lines. Living among the creations of his genius we are steeled and nerved for a great existence, for a manly struggle, for all that is noble and good.

What is the cause of this striking difference? It lies in the fact that Shakespeare was thoroughly national, reflecting in his dramas all the great interests of the England of his time, whilst his successors were no longer rooted in the hearts of their people, were estranged from all their best and truest feelings, and had become the mouth-pieces of a class of men who could no longer be said to represent the English people.

The religious movement which began with the persecutions of Mary, was during the first 25 years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth only an under-current in the stream of English thought. On its surface English life still showed the bright and golden colours of the Renaissance. A gay court, a brilliant nobility, everywhere exuberant life, full of joyful and healthy activity, a society drinking with eagerness the full cup of earthly pleasures, whilst the great struggle with Spain for national existence roused all the best energies of the people and called forth the bold daring, the lofty independence, the patriotic ardour of the English character. And there was one sentiment in which the gay courtier and the precise Puritan were at one: pride in their country, its new glory, its Queen.

Those were the conditions of the time in which Shakespeare flourished. The Puritans, though looking down with narrow-minded bigotry on all worldly pleasures and especially on the theatre, could not help admiring and applauding the noble patriotism and the true English spirit which breathed in Shakespeare's great historical dramas. Here then was the thread by which the drama was still tied to the heart-strings of national life.

But with the accession of James matters changed. He trampled on all that was dearest to the people. With his Papal predilections, his desire of absolute power, his hankering after an alliance with Spain, he chafed the temper of a nation that had become fiercely Protestant and wanted to take its place at the head of the Protestant states of Europe in the great struggle that everybody felt to be coming; a nation which had resigned itself to the tyranny of the Tudors because they were great rulers and made England respected, but would not pardon the tyranny of a King who had no heart for the national honour.

And now the great under-current of Puritan feeling broke forth with irresistible power and the division of the nation became apparent. The gay and glittering throng of courtiers, all those who wished to rise in life by patronage, the High Church party with its Papal propensities and all who loved pleasure for its own sake, rallied round James and

his successor and mocked at the sour looks, the simplicity of dress, and the demure sobriety of the Puritans. Virtue having become Puritanic was held up to ridicule by the Cavaliers, and purity of thought and manners, the feeling of duty, the belief in female honour and chastity, the love of nature and her simple charms, and the unaffected piety of the heart were no longer to be found among the party that patronised the stage. And now the Theatre lost a great chance. Had it remained national, it might have survived. But the dramatists turned aside from the rich well of English history to draw from the polluted sources of Italian and Spanish novels, where they lost themselves in the maze of Machiavellian intrigue, conspiracies, and villainy. If they had struck the cord of national honour and glory, the heart of the people would still have responded. But they preferred to follow the foreign fashions and tastes of a party that had lost its hold on the country, and their dramas reflect the profligacy and impurity of thought and feeling, the brazen selfishness and immorality of the courtiers. A war to the knife began between the Puritans and the theatres, and when the rebellion began and the Cavaliers left London to flock to the Royal Standard at York, one of the first measures of the Long Parliament was the closing of the theatres, the 2nd of September 1642.

The Elizabethan Prose Writers.

Among the many great thinkers and writers in theology, philosophy, history, fiction, in the age of Queen Elizabeth, three may be selected to show the wide horizon of the prose authors of the time: Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Walter Raleigh, Lord Bacon. The first of these holds up the ideal of the age, — the afterglow of chivalry; the second represents reality, the third opens up the view of the great future of mankind.

Sir Philip Sidney, born in 1554, was one of the brightest ornaments of the court of Queen Elizabeth, a true gentleman, a cavalier without fault, and a sincere Christian. In 1585 he joined the English army which helped the Dutch in their war of independence, he distinguished himself and died a soldier's death in the battle of Zutphen 1586 at the age of 32. His many occupations as a courtier and a soldier left him little time for writing, though he is a poet both in verse and in prose. His sonnets addressed to Stella, a lady he loved but failed to win, place him as a writer of sonnets between Surrey and Shakespeare. His pastoral and

chivalrous romance in prose, *Arcadia*, written in 1580 when he was for some time banished from court and lived in the country with his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, became the favourite reading of the ladies and cavaliers of the time. But the literary performance by which he won lasting renown is the essay called '*The Defence of Poetry*' (1583), directed against the furious attacks of the Puritans upon all the arts which embellish life. Sidney does not restrict Poetry to verse alone, but it embraces every kind of literary composition that casts an ideal hue over life, that elevates and purifies the mind. The enemy against whom he takes the field like a true knight-errant, is Philistinism. To him the poet is the great wizard. 'Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry, as many poets have done; neither with pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too much loved earth more lovely; her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden.' The impression his own mind receives from poetry is thus described: 'I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I felt not my heart moved more than with a trumpet.' So he asserts also the practical importance of poetry. It is the poet who rouses the passions and nerves the will to do and to dare.

In contrast with Sidney Sir Walter Raleigh is intensely modern, the very type of the age of the great adventurers, discoverers, builders of empire, a Stanley or Cecil Rhodes of the 16th century. He was born in the year 1552, the son of a country gentleman, whose property lay near Plymouth in Devonshire. He received a university education, fought on the side of the Huguenots in the battle of Jarnac, made his first voyage of discovery and conquest to the West Indies, did honourable service in Ireland, returned to England, and sprang at once into the highest favour with Elizabeth.

The scene so picturesquely described in Walter Scott's *Kenilworth*, when the handsome young cavalier threw his velvet cloak across the muddy path which the Queen was treading, whether true or not, reveals the presence of mind and the gallantry which won him the favour of Elizabeth. She loaded him with honours and wealth. In 1584 he obtained the patent which allowed him to discover and to occupy those lands to which he gave the name of Virginia, and then he laid the foundation of those British colonies, from which two mighty empires of our own time were destined to spring: The United States and the Dominion of Canada. The introduction of the potato and of tobacco into Europe were one of the results of his discoveries. When he lost the Queen's

favour by marrying one of her court ladies, he tried in 1595 to recover it by a great expedition to Guiana. In the following year he published the report of this wonderful journey and soon after distinguished himself in the expedition in which he, together with Lord Howard and the young Earl of Essex, burnt the Spanish fleet in the harbour of Cadix. The accession of James I brought about his fall. He was accused of conspiring against the new king, was tried, convicted, and committed to the Tower where he pined for 14 years consoling himself by writing his great *History of the World*. At last he succeeded in obtaining his liberation by promising to make another expedition to Guiana, to win this supposed El Dorado for England. But this expedition involved him in hostilities with Spain at a time when James I was bent upon forming an alliance with that country. When Raleigh returned, he was arrested and executed, not for a breach of the peace with Spain but upon the old charge of conspiracy, as the king did not dare to bring him to the block for having done what must have endeared him to the people, but wished at the same time to propitiate the King of Spain. Raleigh's manly bearing on the scaffold enhanced his popularity and roused the indignation of all English patriots.

Raleigh's History of the World ends with the overthrow of the Macedonian Kingdom by the Romans in 168 B. C. It is a great pity that Raleigh did not write the history of his own time, in which he had been a principal actor. He excuses himself with these words: „It will be said by many that I might have been more pleasing to the reader, if I had written the story of mine own times, having been permitted to draw water as near the well-head as another. To this I answer that whosoever, in writing a modern history, shall follow truth too near the heels, it may haply strike out his teeth.“

It is self-evident that his *History of the World* is full of mistakes as he blindly follows the Biblical and Classical historians; but how could he anticipate the results of modern research and scientific criticism? As it is, it is a master-piece of style and it is full of fine passages showing the keenness of his intellect, of splendid descriptions of battles and military operations, betraying the experienced soldier and brilliant chief.

His '**Discoverie of Guiana**' is an enthusiastic description of that wonderfully rich and fertile country in order to encourage his people to wrest it from Spain.

The following description of tropical scenery gives a good example of his style.

When we ran to the top of the first hills of the plains adjoining the river, we could see it turn, it ran in three parts, and there appeared some ten or twelve over-falls in sight, every one as high over the other as a church-tower, which fell with that fury that the rebound of waters made it seem as if it had been all covered over with a great shower of rain; and in some places we took it at the first for a smoke that had risen over some great town. I never saw a more beautiful country, nor more lively prospects, hills so raised here and there over the vallies, the river winding into divers branches, the plains adjoining without brush or stubble, all fair green grass, the deer crossing in every path, the birds towards the evening singing on every tree with a thousand several tunes, cranes and herons of white, crimson, and carnation perching on the river's side, the air fresh with a gentle easterly wind, and every stone that we stooped to take up promised either gold or silver by his complexion.

The greatest genius of the time by the side of Shakespeare was **Lord Bacon**, the great thinker who may be considered the father of modern philosophy. Francis Bacon, son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, lord-keeper of the great seal, was born in the year 1561. As a child he showed such precocity of intellect that Queen Elizabeth used to call him her young lord-keeper. At the age of thirteen he entered the university of Cambridge which he left three years later, disgusted with the Aristotelian philosophy, a philosophy, as he said, only strong for disputations and contentions, but barren of works for the benefit of the life of man. He continued his studies for three years in France, then devoted himself to the study of the law and obtained the post of Counsel Extraordinary to the Queen (1590). Three years later he entered parliament where he distinguished himself as an orator. But his ambition and fondness of display enveloped him in intrigues in which the independence of his character suffered; he stooped to flattery and when under James I he had attained the high office of attorney-general, he lent himself to the most arbitrary measures of the court. By these means he succeeded in being created Lord Chancellor and Baron Verulam, Viscount of St. Albans. But in 1621 a parliamentary inquiry led to his condemnation for bribery and corruption and to his final disgrace. Henceforth he had time to concentrate himself entirely on his studies, but continued to live so ostentatiously, that when he died in 1626 his debts amounted to more than 22 000 £. This is the career of the extraordinary man whom Pope called 'the wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind'.

His great work on the Instauration of the Sciences was written in Latin like the works of Descartes and Spinoza; the first volume of it was first published in English 'Of the Proficiency and Advancement of

Learning; in it he divides all human knowledge into the three branches of history, poetry, and philosophy corresponding to the three forces of the human understanding: memory, imagination, and reason. The second part he calls *Novum Organum* or the New Method. This work is the key-stone of his system. All the philosophies of Antiquity and the Middle Ages started from conceptions which the authors drew from their own minds; on these preconceived notions they built up a system which proved utterly barren of results for the greater happiness of Man. Let us henceforth consult experience and observation and we shall arrive at facts, not at opinions to reason about; and thus we shall at last proceed to understand the laws which govern the material world; and knowing them we shall master them, thus subdue the earth, turn it into a real home for man, and make Man wiser, more powerful, and happier. So he is the harbinger of the age of science and of progress; far in advance of his time, which was still painfully labouring to unravel insoluble religious problems, he looks into a distant future, which dawned when the religious dissensions at last gave way to the investigation of the secrets of Nature.

But the work by which Bacon has assured himself a place in English Literature are his famous *Essays*, a work which places him by the side of his great French contemporary Montaigne. In these short compositions he applies his wonderful intellect to the most various interests and problems of life and illumines them with the flash-light of his genius. So he writes on Truth, Death, Adversity, Parents and Children, Marriage and Single Life, Superstition, Friendship, Ambition, Custom and Education, Gardens, Honour and Reputation etc. with a fervour and brilliancy of style, a force of expression, a richness and significance of imagery, unsurpassed by any English writer.

Universities.

As water, whether it be the dew of heaven or the springs of the earth, doth scatter and lose itself in the ground, except it be collected into some receptacle, where it may by union comfort and sustain itself, and, for that cause, the industry of man hath framed and made spring-heads, conduits, cisterns, and pools; so knowledge; whether, it descend from divine inspiration or spring from human sense, would soon perish and vanish to oblivion, if it were not preserved in books, traditions, conferences, and places appointed, as universities, colleges, and schools, for the receipt and comforting the same.

Books.

If the invention of the ship was thought so noble, which carrieth riches and commodities from place to place and consociateth the most remote regions

in participation of their fruits, how much more are letters to be magnified, which, as ships, pass through the vast seas of time, and make ages so distant participate of the wisdom, illuminations, and inventions the one of the other.

Friendship.

Little do men perceive what solitude is; for a crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal where there is no love. The Latin adage meeteth with it a little: *Magna civitas, magna solitudo*; but we may go further, and affirm most truly, that it is a mere and miserable solitude to want true friends, without which the world is but a wilderness; and even in this scene also of solitude, whosoever, in the frame of his nature and affections, is unfit for friendship, he taketh it of the beast, and not from humanity.

The Time of the Civil War, Commonwealth, and Restoration.

The attempt of the Stuarts — *James I* 1603 to 1625 and *Charles I* — 1625 to 1649 — to change the character of the English constitution and make themselves absolute masters of the state and church like the French Kings, or the Czar, led to the dissension of Royalists or Cavaliers and Puritan Republicans and brought about the Civil War, the overthrow and execution of Charles I, and the foundation of the Commonwealth under the Protector Oliver Cromwell. At such a time of political and religious dissension and of open war there was no scope for lighter literature; the interest of the public was engrossed by sterner questions. We watched the glorious sunset of the English drama and its final disappearance at the outbreak of the civil war. There were, however, a certain number of lyric poets, chiefly on the side of the Cavaliers, who, like Anacreon, sang of love and wine and other charms of existence, songs which set to the pretty tunes of Merry Old England continue to delight us even after a space of three centuries; such were Edmund Waller, Abraham Cowley, Robert Herrick, whose most charming love-song is the ode to "Anthea, who may command him anything", beginning:

Bid me to live, and I will live
Thy Protestant to be;
Or bid me love, and I will give
A loving heart to thee.

A heart as soft, a heart as kind,
A heart as sound and free
As in the whole world thou canst find,
That heart I'll give to thee.

But the poet in whom this great age lives in all its glories is

John Milton,

the commanding figure of the 17th century worthy to be ranked with the great statesman and warrior of the time, his friend and master Oliver Cromwell. Milton's youth, a glorious dawn of genius, open to all the charms of human existence, is still under the spell of the Renaissance. Born on the 9th of December 1608 as the son of a well-to-do London lawyer — a scholar and a lover of music — he received a classical education in St. Paul's School and at Christ's College in Cambridge, distinguishing himself by his love of the poets and thinkers of antiquity and his exquisite talent of writing Latin and English verse. For seven years he continued his studies at the university; then he joined his father at his country-seat in the pretty village of Horton in Buckinghamshire, and devoted five more years of his life to a conscientious preparation for some great purpose which he had conceived. Here during these quiet years spent amidst the sweet scenery of Central England, the great lyric poet developed who produced the two finest idylls in the English language — *l'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* —, the most poetical masque: *Comus* —, and the noble dirge on the death of a friend, whom he calls *Lycidas*, a poem which marks the high tide of Milton's lyric poetry and gave promise of highest achievement, — but nearly 30 years were to pass before this promise was fulfilled. Between the appearance of *Lycidas* in 1637 and of *Paradise Lost* in 1667, there is a gulf, — a great revolution lies between which overthrew the Kingdom of Charles and the Commonwealth of Cromwell, and changed the whole tenor and harmony of Milton's life, transforming the bright and genial youth of widest sympathies into a stern and austere old man with burning love and hate, his thoughts and feelings running in a narrow but deep channel with a fierce and irresistible current.

Like Goethe at a later time Milton had wished to complete his self-education as a man and a poet on the classical soil of *Italy*, and he was enjoying his stay there with the same enthusiasm when the news reached him — at Naples — in April 1638 — of the outbreak of political troubles at home, and he determined to return on purpose to take a share in the great struggle which he felt to be at hand. During the following twenty years, when England resounded with the furious debates of the Long Parliament, the fierce invective of a wrangling clergy, the wild clash of arms, the exulting shouts of the victors and the savage curses of the

defeated, Milton was carried away by the rushing tide of party warfare. He determined to devote his splendid genius to the cause of political and religious liberty, — to sacrifice the poet on the altar of his country's freedom.

Living in the city of London as a teacher and a journalist, he watched the movement and the fates of the party with which he had thrown in his lot, not because he identified himself with all its crotchets and its narrow fanaticism, but because he believed that the Puritans were fighting to save the cause of liberty. And this cause he defended in a number of pamphlets and books which in style and substance characterise him as the foremost prose-writer of the age. The most admired of these pamphlets is his *Areopagitica, a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, to the Parliament of England*.

The eloquent assistance which the greatest poet of the time volunteered to the cause of English liberty attracted the attention of Cromwell who made the great scholar Latin secretary to the Committee of Foreign Affairs. For ten years (1649—1659) he translated the dispatches both those which were sent out and those which arrived, defending the republic against the attacks of foreigners in passionate refutations written in Latin (his *Eikonoklastes* and his *Defensio pro Populo Anglico*), sacrificing to politics not only his spiritual nature as a poet, but even the most precious of senses, his eye-sight (1652). And now he sat in total darkness, but continued to dictate his dispatches, being read to and cheered with music by his daughters.

Then the great catastrophe came. Cromwell died without leaving a worthy successor, and England grovelled in the dust before Charles II, the merry monarch, as clever and fascinating, as he was selfish and unprincipled. The Paradise of which the Puritans had dreamt, an England chosen by God to represent His Kingdom in a world of sin, was lost for ever and whilst the sons of Belial filled the land with their abominations, Milton sat down '*In darkness, and with dangers compass'd round*' to write the grand epilogue of the event:

Paradise Lost.

The greatest epic poem of the Anglo-Saxon Race appeared in 1667 in a season of unparalleled calamities and humiliations. A weak and contemptible government disgraced the country, public and private life was corrupted, the court was given up to dissolute frivolity, the power of England had fallen so low that a Dutch fleet swept the Channel with

a broom fixed to the mast of the admiral ship, sailed up the Thames, and burned the naval arsenals of Chatham. Nature herself seemed to be in league against England. A fearful plague broke out in London and carried off two hundred thousand human beings; and when the wretched inhabitants had scarcely recovered from this visitation, the great fire of 1666 laid two thirds of the city in ashes. At such a time Milton sought a publisher for the great work of his life, which appealed to a generation that was gone. No wonder that 10 £ was all the pecuniary reward he received.

Paradise Lost consists of twelve books written in Blank Verse. Heaven and Hell warring for the possession of the Earth, the fall of Man, the triumph of Hell, the announcement of the final victory of Heaven: this is a short summary of the poem. There are three scenes: Hell below, Heaven above, Earth between the two, as the centre of interest, — as in the ancient Miracle Plays. There can be only two human characters in the poem, Adam and Eve, but to these our interest clings with passionate sympathy, with admiring love, with fearful pity, nay with breathless anxiety, for we know that the fate of a thousand generations trembles in the balance together with their lot. Around and about these two the battle rages. From on high in exalted majesty the Almighty Father looks on with his divine Son, the deputy of his power, through whom his will becomes a reality, surrounded by his angels, his messengers in time of peace, his soldiers in war.

Below in Hell Satan sits enthroned swaying with Titanic pride and irresistible passion the turbulent parliament of fallen angels, a proud and daring rebel, plotting revenge on the absolute King of Heaven; and what revenge could be sweeter than to mar and corrupt, to estrange and to usurp that new creation which the Lord had called into being to make up for the loss which Heaven had sustained through the defection of Satan and his host! But these events, the revolt and overthrow of the rebellious angels and the creation of the world and of Man, which lie before the rising of the curtain, are inserted as an episode in their due place in the course of the narrative, in the same manner as the future of the human race and the final doom of Satan form a second great episode in the form of a dream of Adam, towards the end of the poem.

The two first books play in Hell where Satan absorbs our interest. There he lies after his tremendous fall, stunned and bruised, in the realms of darkness dimly lit up by lurid flames, surrounded by his fellow-conspirators. He recovers himself, his daring pride revives and he resolves to continue the struggle. He

succeeds in breathing new life and hope into his comrades and they rear a stupendous building, Pandemonium, a palace in which they meet in solemn council, and a grand parliamentary debate follows. It is a strange fact that in Milton's poem Heaven's King is an absolute and irresponsible ruler, whilst Hell is a republic, in which Satan only enjoys the position of a leader of the majority which he owes to his superior genius and eloquence. The outcome of these debates is the resolution adopted by universal assent to take revenge on the victorious King of Heaven by destroying or spoiling his new creation, and Satan volunteers to undertake a reconnoitring expedition to explore this new world. The gates of Hell are thrown open to him by two ghastly keepers, Sin and Death, when the former recognises in him her father, out of whose head she sprang like Pallas out of the head of Zeus. And now Chaos is revealed through which he has to wing his flight, a perilous journey, until at last this, our, world throws its light far into Chaos, and he sees

„hanging in a golden chain,
This pendent world, in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude, close by the moon;
Thither full-fraught with mischievous revenge,
Accursed, and in a cursed hour, he hies.“

In the third book the Poet emerges from the regions of darkness and greets the heavenly light with a rapturous outburst of painfraught joy:

Hail, holy light! offspring of heaven first born.

With touching pathos he there bewails his own blindness:

„but thou
Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
To find thy piercing ray and find no dawn.
Thus with the year
Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine.“

And now we are in Heaven where the Lord justifies his own course; he has created Man

“sufficient to have stood, though free to fall”.

Free he must be, for there is no virtue where there is no temptation, no conscious choice. But if he falls, justice must be done and he must die, unless some intercessor redeem him by his death. Then Christ offers His life as a ransom for Man, and the Lord accepts the sacrifice which is prompted by love.

In the fourth book Satan alights on a high mountain, and seeing Eden spread out at his feet in all its loveliness he is seized with wild passion, jealousy, and despair. In the deep night that surrounds him the poet conjures up a landscape of most picturesque contour and richest colouring where the idyllic sweetness of English scenery blends with the wild and bold grandeur of the Alps and the luxuriousness of Italian vegetation, a scene to which only a Claude or a Turner could do justice. Like a prowling wolf Satan leaps over the thick hedge that encloses Paradise and beholds the happy inmates.

Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
 God-like erect, with native honour clad,
 In naked majesty, seem'd lords of all.

And what a striking contrast there is between the two!

"For contemplation He and valour formed,
 For softness She, and sweet attractive grace;
 He for God only, She for God in him.
 So hand in hand they pass'd, the loveliest pair
 That ever since in love's embraces met."

Hidden in the thicket Satan listens to their conversation and overhears Adam repeat to his fair partner the stern prohibition to touch the Tree of Knowledge and the terrible threat of death in case of disobedience. On this prohibition he resolves to build his plan of revenge, plotting their ruin whilst the unconscious pair indulge in sweetest talk and dalliance, Eve telling her husband of her first awaking to life. And then evening descends in solemn stillness interrupted only by the singing of the nightingale:

"Silence was pleased, now glowed the firmament
 With living sapphires; Hesperus, that led
 The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon,
 Rising in clouded majesty, at length,
 Apparent queen, unveil'd her peerless light,
 And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw."

The fifth book opens with the description of morning in Paradise. Adam and Eve rise from their sleep and standing up with hands raised in the lovely morning light, they pour forth an unpremeditated prayer. Then God has compassion on their weakness and innocence and resolving to warn them of the impending danger, he sends the archangel Raphael down to Adam who receives him humbly and joyfully; nor does the Angel disdain his hospitality and the banquet of choice fruit which Eve has spread. But when the meal is over, the Angel begins to execute his mission. Here then begins the first great episode, the narrative of the Fall of the Angels which is to warn Adam. It is continued in the sixth book, a graphic description of the fierce battle that raged in Heaven between Satan and God's Angels and ended with the great victory of Christ, who drove the rebellious crew to the edge of the abyss into which they were plunged in dire confusion. Adam has listened in rapt attention; he wishes to know more of these eternal problems and entreats the Angel to tell him of the origin of the world. In the seventh book Raphael relates the story of the Creation, the great work of the six days, — descriptions familiar to Germans and Englishmen alike through the recitatives of Haydn's oratorio.

The episode is continued in the eighth book where Adam enquires into the higher mysteries of cosmos, the movement of the heavenly bodies, but he is warned by the Archangel against such speculations which the Lord

Hath left to men's disputes, perhaps to move
 His laughter at their quaint opinions wide.

Fulfil the duty that lies nearest before thee, serve and fear God, and above all: obey, — such is the burden of Raphael's message.

And now Adam takes up the conversation and tells of his first waking.

“Straight toward heaven my wondering eyes I turn'd
And gazed awhile the ample sky.”

But soon he feels solitary and the Lord creates Eve,

“so lovely fair,
That what seem'd fair in all the world, seem'd now
Mean, or in her summ'd up, in her contain'd.
Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love.

The ninth book tells us of the great catastrophe. When Adam and Eve, come forth in the morning; Eve proposes for once to divide their labours, each working apart. In vain Adam warns her; why should she fear being guiltless? is her argument. So Adam consents

“for thy stay, not free, absents thee more”

and Eve leaves him fully warned and therefore fully armed. Once more the poet shows her to us in the irresistible charm of her unconscious loveliness. His stern heart melts to see one so beautiful, so innocent, exposed to such a fierce and crafty enemy. Satan in the shape of the serpent seeking for her finds her in a bower of roses occupied in propping up the drooping tendrils

“mindless the while
Herself, though fairest unsupported flower,
From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.”

And the serpent slips out of the thicket and attracts her attention by his graceful gambols and at last addresses her with subtlest flattery. Eve's interest is caught, but the question that first suggests itself is: whence this gift of speech? He declares that he obtained reason and speech by eating of a certain tree, and leads the way, hopeful, with raised crest, rolling in glittering circles, until he stops before the Tree of Knowledge. Then Eve refuses to eat, alleging God's prohibition. But it was jealousy, the Serpent declares, that induced the Lord to forbid Man to eat of the tree, as he wishes to keep Man weak and ignorant. For if a brute like himself received the human gift of speech and reason by eating of this tree, what could not Man attain to? Though the penalty for Man were death, yet would he not relive as a God?

In the meantime the hour of noon is come, Eve's appetite is roused, excited by the savoury smell of the delicious fruit; and now

“her rash hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the fruit, she pluck'd, she ate!
Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe.”

Adam in the meantime longing for her return has woven
“of choicest flowers a garland, to adorn
Her tresses,”

but his heart misgives him; he goes to seek her and near the fatal tree he finds her "in her hand a bough of fairest fruit". Whilst she skilfully tells her sad tale, Adam is seized with horror,

"From his slack hand the garland wreathed for Eve
Down dropt, and all the faded roses shed."

His mind is made up; Paradise without Eve would be no Paradise for him. He resolves to share her fate, loving God's creature more than God; and so

"he scrupled not to eat,
Against his better knowledge; not deceived,
But fondly overcome with female charm."

And now they are intoxicated with the delicious juice of the fruit; forgetting past and future they enjoy their mutual love. But soon they awake from their trance; their eyes are opened to their guilt as to their nakedness. Now even their love is darkened by passion:

"Thus they in mutual accusation spent
The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning;
And of their vain contest appear'd no end."

The tenth book tells of the consequences of the fall. Christ descends in judgment and pronounces sentence on Eve and his curse on the Serpent. Adam and Eve shall die, but not at once. They shall leave Paradise and eat their bread in the sweat of their brow.

Then follows a scene of grandest conception. The two ghastly keepers of Hell-Gate feel an instinctive attraction towards the Earth. Death sniffs the air and gets the scent of carnage

"sagacious of his quarry from so far".

And the two demons rear a stupendous bridge over Chaos to ease the passage from Earth to Hell to the millions that are to pass that way. Satan bids them good speed, and so they descend upon the Earth, there to reign.

But when Satan appears in a blaze in the midst of Pandemonium and announces his triumph, the enthusiastic applause of his compeers is changed into a dismal universal hiss, all the devils having been changed into snakes by the power of God.

Then God prepares such alterations in the order of the world as to make the Earth what it now is, a place harassed by excesses of heat and cold, by storms and earthquake, where discord and enmity prevail and a war of all against all.

Adam watches the process in gloomy despair and yearns for death; but Eve's passionate pleading and her sweet tenderness soothe him; she asks and obtains forgiveness and Adam resolves to bear up against fate: "with labour I must earn my bread; what harm? Idleness had been worse; my labour will sustain me." And in a spirit of humiliation and repentance they unite in praying for God's forgiveness.

Justice tempered with mercy and gentle pity is the keynote of the last two books.

The prayers of our first ancestors rise up to Heaven, Christ offers Himself in atonement for their crime. The Lord accepts it, but justice must be done. So Michael is charged to expel Adam and Eve from Paradise,

“but all terror hide

And send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace.”

Michael comforts Adam and shows him in a trance the future destinies of his race, the great stages in the development and history of Mankind. Here then follows the second great episode which in the plan of the whole poem may be compared with the description of the shield of Aeneas in the Aeneid.

Adam hears and sees many a saddening scene but also the birth of the Messiah, the second Adam who redeems Mankind, paying the ransom with His life; and he is filled with the hope that the Saviour will return and crush the head of the Serpent.

Then the angels descend in bright array to mount guard at the gates of Paradise, and Michael taking Adam and Eve by the hand, leads them to the Eastern gate.

“Some natural tears they dropt, but wiped them soon;

The world was all before them, where to choose

Their place of rest, and Providence their guide;

They hand in hand, with wand’ring steps and slow

Through Eden took their solitary way.”

Paradise Regained

appeared in 1671; it may be considered an epilogue, a necessary complement to *Paradise Lost*. Satan triumphing over Man, the subject of *Paradise Lost*, required a continuation describing Christ victorious over Satan. The first Adam, an easy prey to the cunning of Satan, had forfeited Paradise; the second Adam, attacked by Satan with all his malice, foils the attempts of the Arch-Enemy, overthrows him, and Paradise is regained.

The subject of the poem is indeed a very narrow one, namely the temptation and victory of Christ; and here the poet is bound by the gospel narrative, so that the poem may be called a paraphrase of the first eleven verses of the 4th Chapter of St. Matthew. There is of course a total want of human interest; the only two characters of the poem are supernatural. Jesus is fully conscious of His divine nature; as the Son of God He confronts the Prince of Darkness; and so they face each other as the two hostile principles of Good and Evil. Besides there is too little action. Satan offers temptation after temptation, and attack after attack is repulsed with the weapon of truth and sublime virtue. Consequently the poem consists of discussions, arguments upon arguments being marshalled in full array on either side. Yet the poet never tires; we listen to the grand debate with rapt attention, but our interest is chiefly roused by the display of logical force and moral grandeur, not by the beauty and charm of poetry.

Samson Agonistes

appeared together with *Paradise Regained*. Samson blinded and fettered, grinding in the bondage of the Philistines, is a fit representative of Milton's own fate and of the lost cause of the Puritans. The victory of the god-fearing Puritans over Charles and his Cavaliers seemed as marvellous as that of Samson over the idolatrous Philistines; but dissensions arose among the conquerors, the purity and justice of the cause suffered, and as Samson's weakness and disobedience was punished through the triumph of the Philistines, feasting in the temple of their idol, so the Puritans succumbed to the lewd Cavaliers who returned under Charles II and revelled in the land of the Children of God. But the time would come when the righteous would rise from their deep fall and would overwhelm the revellers with ruin, as Samson buried his exulting foes even under the falling columns of their own temple. And looking upon himself as the truest type of that lost cause, Milton found in his own life two points of striking resemblance with that of Samson: his marriage with a Philistine woman (his first wife Mary Powell of royalist blood) and his blindness.

The drama the subject of which recalls the ancient drama *Prometheus*, is written in strict imitation of the Greek drama, observing the unities and introducing a chorus of Hebrew captives. There is a stern grandeur about the play which reminds us of the tragedies of Aeschylus.

Samuel Butler 1616—1680 and John Bunyan 1628—1688.

The deadly feud between Roundheads and Cavaliers survived the restoration of the Stuarts. The triumphant Royalists mocked at the „Saints“ who were in their eyes nothing but a set of rapacious hypocrites. The Puritans set their hope on the Lord who would in due time destroy their enemies and restore them to power. The former laughed at virtue and saintliness, since these words were constantly in the mouths of their enemies, the latter thanked God like the famous Pharisee that they were not like „one of these“. In poetry the representation of the Royalist feeling may be found in Butler's *Hudibras*, that of the Puritan views and beliefs in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

The fundamental idea of **Butler's *Hudibras*** is borrowed from Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. The Puritan justice of the peace Hudibras sallies forth, accompanied by his clerk, the Independent Ralph (like *Don Quixote*

and Sancho Pansa) to seek for adventures while fighting against King and Church. In a masterly manner the poet satirises the hypocritical pharisaism, the intolerance, and greed of Puritans and Independents, who are ravenous wolves in sheep's clothing. His rhymed couplets, each line consisting of four iambics, strike home like well-aimed poisonous arrows. *Hudibras* is undoubtedly the wittiest and keenest satire in the English language. Thus he describes the eloquence of this Puritan preacher:

But, when he pleas'd to shew't, his speech
 In loftiness of sound was rich;
 A Babylonish dialect,
 Which learned pedants much affect;
 It was a party-colour'd dress
 Of patch'd and piebald languages;
 'Twas English cut on Greek and Latin,
 Like fustian heretofore on satin;
 It had an odd promiscuous tone,
 As if h'had talk'd three parts in one;
 Which made some think, when he did gabble,
 Th'had heard three labourers of Babel,
 Or Cerberus himself pronounce
 A leash of languages at once,
 This he as volubly would vent
 As if his stock would ne'er be spent;
 For truly to support that charge,
 He had supplies as vast and large.
 For he could coin and counterfeit
 New words, with little or no wit.

John Bunyan was born at Elstow near Bedford in 1628 as the son of a poor tinker, a trade which he practised until he entered the parliamentary army. In 1655 he joined the sect of the Baptists and soon became a leading open-air preacher. When at the Restoration the persecution of all Nonconformists began, Bunyan was thrown into the Bedford jail where he was kept for 12 years. Set free in 1672 he continued to practise his two professions as a tinker and as a preacher until he died in London in 1688.

In Bunyan the religious fervour of the Anglo-Saxon race which had revealed itself in *Piers Plowman* breaks out with elementary power, and makes his *Pilgrim's Progress* a household book of the Anglo-Saxon race all over the world, the only book beside the Bible which is allowed to be read on the Sabbath Day in pious families in England, in Canada, at the Cape, in Australia and New Zealand. Like *Piers Plowman* it is

an allegory in the form of a dream, describing the journey of Christian to New Jerusalem, that is to say the pilgrimage of a true Christian to find eternal salvation. The wonderfully realistic style, the vivid and telling delineation of such worldly characters as Mr. Pliable, Mr. Worldly Wiseman, Mr. By-ends, Mr. Talkative and Mr. Implacable, Mr. No-good and Mr. Malice, and the exciting interest attaching to such passages as Christian's sufferings in the Valley of the Shadow of Death and in Doubting Castle make the reading of the book a delight like the adventures of Robinson Crusoe or of Gulliver.

The Age of

Pseudo-classicism, Natural Science, and Moral Philosophy.

The second half of the 17th century bears the stamp of the French Mind; it has justly been called the Age of Lewis the Fourteenth and the great French authors of the time pride themselves on being the legitimate successors of the classical writers of Greece and Rome. For a time then this supposed classical spirit supplanted national and truly popular literature wherever French influence could fully assert itself, — perhaps not so powerfully in England as in Germany where the national spirit had been almost crushed by the 30 Years' War; still also in England this imitation of French classicism prevailed and estranged the people from their old ideals, making them forget the great, racy, and truly national poetry of the time of Elizabeth. The movement was favoured by the King and the Court. Charles had passed his youth in exile on the continent and had entirely come under the spell of Parisian society; and the nobility and gentry of England, disgusted with the forms which English life and thought had assumed under the Commonwealth, gladly and passionately rallied around their king and along with him rushed into French bondage. This influence is felt for nearly eighty years. English society endeavours to come near the ideal of the French salon. English literature reflects the life of the higher classes, of London and the court, of the drawing-room and the coffee-house. The wide interests of humanity, the yearnings of the heart, Nature, the country, the Nation with its struggles and aspirations, are no more to be found in this literature than they are reflected in the French poetry of the 'grand siècle'. No great and original poet appears; but composition becomes an art and a science; perfection of form and of execution is the study of the poet, correctness his ideal. The authors of the time attain a wonderful smoothness and elegance

of style; their verses present a glittering succession of witty sayings, of striking antitheses; every couplet contains some happy thought in a form which easily commits itself to memory. The two great and immortal poems of the period — *Paradise Lost* and the *Pilgrim's Progress* — are an anachronism; they stand apart. The representative author is

John Dryden 1631—1701,

appointed poet laureate in 1668; the favourite of the two Stuart Kings Charles II and James II; with the latter he ingratiated himself by turning Roman Catholic. The king made the renegade royal historiographer, a position which he was forced to resign after the Great Revolution.

Dryden is the first *dramatist* of the time. The theatre which had been reopened at the Restoration endeavoured to imitate the French regular drama. It was certainly progressive to at last allow the female parts to be played by women and to introduce moveable scenery; but the dramatists adopted also the three unities, the artificial tone of the dialogue, the confidants of the French drama, and the Alexandrine metre. Shakespeare's introduction of comic characters by way of contrast in tragedy also was then thought barbarous. The unnatural and stilted style of the French theatre where only princes and nobles strut the boards, was faithfully imitated by Dryden; though he knew, appreciated, and occasionally plundered Shakespeare and in fact tried to reconcile the classical style of the French with the romantic and national spirit of the Elizabethan drama; an attempt which could not but prove abortive. The wide range of his subjects will be seen from the following titles: *The Indian Emperor* — treating of the conquest of Mexico by Cortez, — *The Tempest* or *the Enchanted Island* — after Shakespeare —, *The Conquest of Granada*; *All for Love* — after Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra; *Don Sebastian*, the King of Portugal who disappeared in the battle against the Moors; *King Arthur*, *Amphitryon* — after Plautus and Molière.

Dryden is a very versatile poet distinguishing himself in nearly all domains of literature. He introduced himself to public notice by two odes which followed each other closely: in 1659 an *Ode on the Death of Cromwell*, in 1660 *Astraea redux*, an ode on the return of the king. It was in his political satires that he could best show his flashing wit — and merciless mockery. In *Absalom and Achitophel* he attacked the Duke of Monmouth and his adviser Shaftesbury.

In *the Hind and the Panther*, an allegorical satire (1687), he broke a lance for Roman Catholicism, celebrating it in the character of the milkwhite hind, whilst he attacked the Anglican church as the panther, the Protestant sects as wolves and bears. In a poem called *Britannia Rediviva* he celebrated an event which contributed so much to bring about the Revolution, the birth of the Prince of Wales, known at the later time as the Old Pretender. In 1697 he wrote his beautiful ode on the power of music, called *Alexander's Feast*. In his *Fables* he vied with Chaucer in telling the story of Palamon and Arcite. His art as a translator may be admired in his translation of *Virgil's Aeneis* in rhymed couplets.

Dryden's style may be illustrated by the following description of Shaftesbury.

"Of these (Puritan rebels) the false Achitophel was first,
 A name to all succeeding ages curst,
 For close designs and crooked counsels fit,
 Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
 Restless, unfixed in principles and place,
 In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace;
 A fiery soul which, working out its way,
 Fretted the pigmy body to decay;
 A daring pilot in extremity;
 Pleased with the danger, when the storm went high,
 He sought the storm, but, for a calm unfit,
 Would steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit.
 Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
 And thin partitions do their bounds divide;
 Else why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
 Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
 Punish a body which he could not please;
 Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?
 And all to leave what with his toil he won
 To that unfeathered, two-legged thing, a son?

Thomas Otway (1651—1685)

a young and unfortunate rival whose life and extraordinary talent recalls the extravagant young authors of the Elizabethan stage, proved a more successful dramatist than Dryden. He wrote a number of highly successful dramas, among them a *Don Carlos* which Schiller may have known. But his fame rests on the two tragedies *the Orphan* and *Venice Preserved*. His genius shines in the delineation of the passions of the heart,

the ardour of love, and the excess of misery and despair. His style appeals more deeply to our feelings than the polished and cold rhetoric of Dryden.

Venice Preserved originated in the political circumstances of the time and at first no doubt derived part of its popularity from the allusions to passing events, but the real human interest preserved it, when the political crisis it represented, was long forgotten. The reign of Charles II was disturbed by plots, real and fictitious ones, which kept the public in a state of anxiety. The fear of the Protestant party for their religious and political freedom increased as Charles grew older without having a legitimate son to succeed him. His brother James was an avowed and fanatic Roman Catholic and if he were to succeed, the ruin of the Protestant cause and of the political liberties of the nation seemed imminent. At this time a bold impostor, Titus Oates, denounced a Popish Plot set on foot to murder King Charles, to massacre the Protestants, and to make England Catholic under James. In a frenzy of terror the extreme Puritan party demanded in countless addresses the exclusion of the Duke of York from the right of succession whilst the court party abhorred such a measure, and soon the whole nation was divided into two great parties of Addressers and Abhorrrers or as they soon came to be called Whigs and Tories, the former insisting on the Protestant succession, upon resistance to French arrogance abroad, and upon the strict control of the crown by Parliament at home; the latter upholding the royal prerogative, the legitimate succession without regard to the religion of the successor, peace and friendship with France, the strengthening of High Church principles and the suppression of Puritans and Presbyterianism. But the fury of the Whigs brought about a reaction in favour of the crown. Seeing that the tide of public feeling was turning against them, the leaders of the Whigs formed a plot to prevent the succession of James by putting the illegitimate son of Charles, the Duke of Monmouth, on the throne. A second plot, to murder the King and make way for Monmouth existed side by side with it, called after the place where the king was to be assassinated, the Rye House Plot. Both plots were discovered, were mixed up with one another and were ruthlessly avenged. The king reigned without Parliament up to his death, James succeeded, and the attempt of Monmouth to obtain the crown in open rebellion ended in his death on the scaffold. The failure of the so-called Rye House Plot was hailed by the fashionable society of playgoers with delight and this moment was seized by Otway to produce his **Venice Preserved** in which he drew a splendid picture of the Republic of Venice, its duke and its senate, and its all-powerful aristocracy which had made Venice great and which wished to preserve its ancient constitution unchanged in spite of the inward rottenness of the state. A conspiracy is formed by a brave and resolute citizen, Pierre, to bring about a revolution, but his fellow conspirators are a band of profligate Catilinarians. A traitor saves the Venetian constitution from being destroyed by these villains. The interest of the plot lies in the passionate love of this traitor, Jaffier, for Belvidera, the daughter of a powerful and haughty senator, Priuli who refuses to marry her to a man below his rank. The conflict in Jaffier between his friendship for Pierre and his love for Belvidera

and the conflict in Belvidera between her love for her father and her love for her husband are represented in powerful and touching scenes which have kept the interest in the play alive down to our own time.

Comedy under the last Stuarts.

The Comic Muse under Charles II and James II was in the words of Thackeray a disreputable, daring, laughing, painted French baggage, clever and amusing but utterly immoral, a worthy representative of the state of a society who tried to make up for the loss of enjoyment under the Puritans. The greatest writer of comedy is

William Wycherley (1640—1715).

He produced his most famous (or infamous) comedies between 1670 and 1680, they are *Love in a Wood*, *the Gentleman Dancing-Master*, *the Country Wife*, and *the Plain Dealer*. In these plays the dialogue is most animated and sparkling, with pointed remarks. Listening to these debates we seem to watch two professional fencers who let their flashing foils play with wonderful agility; so keen and glittering is the wit, so rapid and cutting the repartee. As to the characters represented, they may be said to be now quietly entombed in their own corruption. And yet Wycherley was considered the type of the true gentleman by the great poet of the following generation, Alexander Pope.

Science and Moral Philosophy.

We should wrong this period of English Literature, if we passed over the great claim it has to the gratitude of future generations, — it laid the foundation of modern science. At the same time when on the continent of Europe religious fanaticism exhausted itself in the horrors of the 30 Years' War, until at last the Peace of Westphalia brought about religious peace and men's minds turned to other objects of study, the English people got tired of religious speculation and barren discussions on Church Government, transubstantiation, free will, predestination etc. They now turned with eager curiosity to the study of Nature. Chemistry became the fashion at court, and in his laboratory Charles II threw off the indolence which he showed in the council-chamber. *The Royal Society* was founded which was destined to become one of the lasting glories of England. Then it was that Bacon began to be appreciated, the father of modern thought who had boldly broken with the traditions of mediaeval

and monkish philosophy and had turned from the insoluble problems of theology to the conquest of Nature. Then it was that *Sir Isaac Newton* began that series of discoveries which have made him the founder of *Modern Science*.

Next to Newton ranks

John Locke, (1632—1704),

whom we may call the father of modern philosophy; without him the period of enlightenment in both England and France, the work of Hume and Berkeley as well as that of Montesquieu and the Encyclopedists could not be understood. His first work gave expression to an idea which could not have been uttered before: that all religious denominations should be tolerated, provided they did not offend against public order and the laws of the state. This idea was expressed in his *Letters of Toleration* (1689). In the same year he published his *Treatise on Government* in which he justified the Great and Glorious Revolution, basing his argument on the same theory to which Rousseau was to give a wider application in his *Contrat Social*: the theory of the Sovereignty of the People. In his *Thoughts concerning Education* (1693) he anticipates Rousseau's ideal as represented in his *Émile*, especially with regard to the importance of physical education and the training of character.

But his most important philosophical work is his *Essay on Human Understanding* (1690) in which he once and for all renounces the philosophy of Aristoteles. There are no innate ideas; all human knowledge arises from external impressions; the soul is a blank page on which the objects which surround us impress themselves through the action of our senses. Thus he denies every supernatural source of experience.

Locke's style explains his wide-spread influence and popularity; it is so clear and simple that every educated man can understand it. This accounts for the great reading public he found and for the delight which the higher classes of the 18th century took in philosophical speculation.

The Augustan Aera of English Literature.

The folly of James II which induced him to sap the very props of his power, brought about the *Great Revolution*. He estranged the Tories by favouring the Roman Catholic Irish, and he drove the staunchest friends of his House, the clergy of the Established Church, to despair by introducing the Jesuits into the universities and church livings. For

a moment all parties united against the common enemy, and James had time to repent of his madness during his exile at St. Germain. The new rulers, William and Mary, made the court again respectable, but the foreign King lacked the art of ingratiating himself with his new subjects, and was therefore unable to exercise any influence on the prevailing tone of society. The worst feature of the time was the immorality of political parties. No sooner was the immediate end attained and the Stuart King expelled, than the hostility between the two great parties broke out with increased bitterness. The king died, worn out by the factious opposition that met him everywhere, and left the Kingdom to a successor who had the double advantage of being a woman and a native of England.

And **Queen Anne** found in the Duke of Marlborough the minister who, master of intrigue as he was, could beat the rival factions with their own weapons. He succeeded in uniting them for a time in the great national contest with France, called the War of the Spanish Succession; until the smouldering fire of party-strife blazed forth again more fiercely than ever, and the Tories overthrew the great Whig minister, to be in their turn a few years later at the death of the queen ignominiously driven from power. During these dissensions and intrigues of an utterly unprincipled aristocracy, in this desperate scramble for political power and social influence, literature was destined to play an extraordinary part. Never has mere literary talent enjoyed such influence and reaped such rewards in wealth and worldly distinction as in the reign of Queen Anne, when for the first time in history the Press put forth its enormous power. Indeed, the aristocracy of birth bowed to the aristocracy of genius.

But this proud position of literature had its draw-backs. The age of Queen Anne has been justly called the Augustan age of English literature. As the Roman poets lived near the court and breathed the tainted air of a rich and fashionable capital, of a worldly society, incapable of enthusiasm or true and deep emotions, but eager to be amused by the play of wit and the glitter of fancy, so the English poet of this age found his audience among the powdered and painted ladies of London who listened over their shoulder to the fashionable talk, the amusing scandal, the polite sneer of fine lords in their flowing periwigs, ribbons and lace. To such an audience how could the poet pour out the passionate emotions of a deeply moved heart; or the eloquent description of the wonders of Nature? No flights of genius, no eccentricity of thought or of diction could be allowed him; clear common sense, the plausible, the respectable common-place are his domain. The success of the author does not depend

upon what he says, but how he says it. French influence is still apparent; the country has lost its charm for the Englishman of the period. To shine in the drawing-room by sparkling conversation is his ideal, he poses, he calculates and prepares an effect like a Parisian. The poet's style and composition are formed on Boileau. He together with Horace, especially in his satires, are no doubt his great models.

The true type of the authors of the period, the most successful poet of elegant society and of conventional life, the greatest of the 'Wits' of the period is

Alexander Pope.

Pope was born in 1688, the son of a rich tradesman who had retired from business and lived in the country near Windsor. Being sickly and deformed, he was cut off from the manly sports of English youth and grew up a dreamy, oversensitive, precocious boy. The father who doted on his delicate son, let him have his will, nay encouraged him in his poetical compositions. At the age of fourteen he had read the poets of Greece, Rome, Italy, France, and England and possessed full mastery over his own language

"As yet a child, and all unknown to fame,
I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came."

In his first poem on *Windsor Forest* he blends description of natural scenery with the historical and moral associations, called up by the landscape he describes. Here Pope strikes for the first time a chord which was to sound again and again in the poetry of the 18th century; the beauty of nature, which found its echo in Thomson's *Seasons*, in Haller's „Alpen“ and in Kleist's „Frühling“.

In 1711 appeared Pope's *Essay on Criticism* composed in the rhymed couplet of verses of five accents. Since that time the rhythm of the heroic couplet as fixed by Pope has remained the classical model of English versification.

The mock-heroic poem "**the Rape of the Lock**" shows the peculiar genius of Pope at its best, whilst it is the most characteristic poem of the period. The rich and airy fancy and the glittering wit of the poet throw the charm of poetry over the frivolities of fashionable life.

Lord Petre, a famous beau of the period, has stolen a lock of hair from his lady-love, Miss Arabella Fermor. The lady had taken offence at this and an estrangement was the result. The avowed purpose of the poem was to laugh

the lovers together again, in which however it failed. The poet presents to us a charming picture of fashionable life in the drawing-room and in the boudoir of the time of Queen Anne. Into this society the poet introduces a host of airy spirits, sylphs, gnomes, nymphs, and salamanders inhabiting the elements. Invisible they wait on the fair one and have a share in bringing about the final catastrophe. No doubt the poet took his inspiration from Shakespeare's *Tempest* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The following lines describe the severing of the lock:

But when to mischief mortals bend their will,
 How soon they find fit instruments of ill!
 Just then Clarissa drew with tempting grace
 A two-edg'd weapon from her shining case:
 So ladies in romance assist their knight,
 Present the spear and arm him for the fight.
 He takes the gift with reverence and extends
 The little engine on his fingers' ends;
 This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,
 As o'er the fragrant steam she bends her head.
 Swift to the lock a thousand sprites repair,
 A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair.
 And thrice they twitched the diamond in her ear;
 Thrice she drew back and thrice the foe drew near.
 The peer now spreads the glittering forceps wide,
 T'inclose the lock; now joins it, to divide,
 Ev'n then, before the fatal engine closed,
 A wretched sylph too fondly interposed;
 Fate urged the shears, and cut the sylph in twain,
 (But airy substance soon unites again;)
 The meeting points the sacred hair dis sever
 From the fair head, for ever and for ever!

In the year 1715 Pope began his *translation of Homer* which raised him in the opinion of his contemporaries to the highest pinnacle of poetic fame. But no translator has ever been less fit for his work than Pope. How could the cold and brilliant poet of conventional life, of an artificial and sceptical society reproduce the simple grandeur and the unaffected truth of the Greek poet! Pope's *Homer* is indeed nothing but a brilliant travesty.

He was now at the height of his fame and his charming villa at Twickenham on the Thames was the meeting-place of the world of genius and of fashion. Being a Roman Catholic he naturally felt a stronger attraction to the Tories who favoured the restoration of the Stuarts than to the Whigs and the partisans of the Protestant succession of the House of Hanover. But in spite of his success Pope was an unhappy man.

Debarred by ill health and deformity from manly activity, without wife and children, he had but one interest in life, that of literary distinction, and so he looked with jealous eyes on every possible rival on the English Parnassus. Implacable in his resentment, endowed with the keenest intellect, the sharpest wit, he was irresistibly attracted to satire. The *Dunciad* in which he pilloried a number of insignificant authors who had ventured to attack him, remains as a monument of his wit and his cruelty.

The peculiarity of his genius comes out strongest in his *Imitations of Horace* in which he far surpasses his two great models, Boileau and Horace, in the keenness of his satire. But he did not attack vice as the champion of virtue, but from mere personal motives, spite, envy, revenge. His verses on his greatest rival, Addison, are a marvellous sample of cleverest satire, but they violate truth and good feeling alike.

The most celebrated poem of Pope, the *Essay on Man*, appeared between 1732 and 1734. It consists of four epistles written in the heroic couplet and addressed to the famous Tory wit and statesman, Lord Bolingbroke. The *Essay* is a vindication of Providence, an elegant theodicy.

The characteristic feature of the age is common-sense; to this he appeals throughout. Since the revolution, literature had been in close alliance with politics. As the politician addressed his arguments to a general audience, the philosopher spoke to the ignorant multitude, and became popular in method and language. Poetry caught the infection and dealt in preference with those universal limited truths which we call common-places. And so Pope delighted his century and was admired as a metaphysician even by the great philosopher of Sans Souci, though we should now call his reasoning shallow and superficial. But when we turn from the matter of his essay to the execution, we are struck with wonder. His style is perfection. Every thought has been turned over and over, till it is brought out with admirable finish and pointedness. The poem contains a string of passages of exquisite beauty and of happily turned epigrams that at once fix themselves in the memory, — like the following description of Man.

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan.
The proper study of mankind is man.
Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise and rudely great;
With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,
With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
He hangs between: in doubt to act, or rest;
In doubt to deem himself a God, or beast;
In doubt his mind or body to prefer;
Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
Whether he thinks too little or too much:

Chaos of thought and passion, all confus'd;
 Still by himself abus'd or disabus'd;
 Created half to rise and half to fall;
 Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
 Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd;
 The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!

In 1744 Pope died. He was the poet of an artificial life and society but as such unrivalled, the greatest master of style England has known.

By the side of Pope, sharing with him the admiration, the fear and hate of his contemporaries, stands

Jonathan Swift,

one of the most powerful satirists in the history of literature. Born at Dublin in 1667, the posthumous son of a poor man, brought up at the expense of an uncle, he suffered many hardships and humiliations which preyed on his mind and soured his disposition. Swift took holy orders and was a staunch champion of the clergy of the Church of England and of High Church principles to his last breath. But he grew tired of the monotony of the life of a country-clergyman in Ireland, and went to London where owing to the intensity of party strife, literary talent was in great request. The social atmosphere of London rapidly fostered his marvellous talent for satire.

The *Tale of a Tub*, which appeared in 1704, is a masterpiece of wit; it is a fierce satire on all religions with the exception of Anglicanism. Swift had at first attached himself to the Whig Ministry, but soon discovered that his High-Church principles must in the long run clash with the policy of the Whigs who endeavoured to conciliate the Dissenters, and he therefore deserted his old friends. He was received with open arms by the Tories and at once began that extraordinary paper-warfare which changed the aspect of European affairs. In the paper he founded — *the Examiner* — he attacked the Whigs with dexterity appealing with great skill to the prejudices of the reader; showing the vast costs of the war (of the Spanish Succession), a ruinous war utterly foreign to the interests of England, which was begun to lift the Whigs into office and was continued to keep them there. He continued his attack in an anonymous pamphlet — *the Conduct of the Allies*, in 1711, in which he grappled with Marlborough himself, exposing his intrigues, his meanness, his rapacity and falsehood, until he had roused such a storm of public indignation that the conqueror of France broke down under the weight of the accusation, and the Whig government was forced to resign.

For a moment — in 1713 — Swift's position was commanding. He dictated the political opinion of half the nation, made peace with France (at Utrecht) and confounded the schemes of aggrandisement of Austria. But the triumph of the Tories was short-lived, Queen Anne died and the Act of Settlement which secured the Hanoverian succession was adhered to by the mass of the people. The Tory party broke up, George I slipped into the vacant throne, and for half a century the Whigs ruled England. Swift retired to his deanery of St. Patrick at Dublin, a disappointed man with vast energies unemployed, eating out his heart in exile. Here he made himself the champion of the oppressed Irish against the Whig government under Sir Robert Walpole. In this cause he published his *Drapier's Letters* in which he forced the government to abandon its scheme of supplying Ireland with a copper coinage.

In 1726 he published the book by which he was destined to live among succeeding generations and he, the stern and harsh clergyman, to become a favourite of the children of many nations. **Gulliver's Travels** appears to us now only a fascinating tale of adventures which are brought home to us with a convincing reality.

Who does not remember with delight the picture of Gulliver drawing the fleet of the island of Blefuscu by the ships' cables through the narrow channel which separates that island from the country of the Lilliputians, or his dangers and hair-breadth escapes when he is the toy of the princess among the giants of Brobdingnag? But this book is a merciless satire both on the social condition of the England of the poet's time and on the follies of mankind in general. Think of the ridiculous party-warfare of the Tramecksans and Slamecksans, the Whigs and Tories of the Lilliputians, think of the university of fools, the Academy of Lagado, and of the horrid caricatures of men, the Yahoos, passages in which Swift discloses the withering contempt of the human species which he had laid up in his breast.

Swift owes his success as a writer to the marvellous realism of his style. His accounts of men, manners, events, scenery read like the depositions of a witness in a court-of-law or like the report of a coroner's inquest: he produces complete illusion.

Of his poems the best are "*a Description of a City Shower*" and "*Verses on his own Death*". The latter ends with the words:

As for his works in verse or prose,
I own myself no judge of those.
Nor can I tell what critics thought 'em,
But this I know, all people bought 'em.

He gave the little wealth he had
To build a house for fools and mad;
To show, by one satiric touch,
No nation wanted it so much.
That kingdom he hath left his debtor;
I wish it soon may have a better,
And, since you dread no further lashes,
Methinks you may forgive his ashes.

The man who left his large savings to a Lunatic Asylum had for years past felt madness overclouding his brain. During the last three years of his life he sat in total silence. He died in 1745.

The third and most important in the triumvirate of great authors in the reign of Queen Anne is

Joseph Addison.

Though scarcely superior to his two rivals in talent, he has certainly exercised a more lasting influence on his audience. A man of rare integrity of character and purity of heart in a time of unblushing selfishness and immorality, he devoted his best energies to the purifying of the taste and morals of his country, by raising before the eyes of his contemporaries the ideal of a natural, healthy, and happy life, and by being the first to sketch the character of the English gentleman. The truthfulness of his heart, his clear good sense, and power of reasoning are reflected in his lucid, natural, and beautiful style which forms an epoch in the history of the English language.

Addison was born in 1672, the son of a clergyman of the Established Church. Ten years he spent at Magdalen College in the University of Oxford as a quiet and studious boy and as a man absorbed in reading and speculation. His classical attainments, his Latin verse were the wonder of the University. In 1699 one of the Whig ministers, Lord Somers, procured for him a grant of £ 300 in order that he might make a tour in Italy. Like Milton he revelled in the contemplation of the scenes hallowed in history and song, and in the loveliness of the Italian landscape; but like Milton he was moved with pity at the sufferings of the enslaved inhabitants and filled with pride in his consciousness of being the son of a free country. To these emotions he gave an eloquent expression in his *Letter to Lord Halifax* (1701), where he breaks out into the following rhapsody:

O Liberty, thou goddess heavenly bright,
 Profuse of bliss, and pregnant with delight!
 Eternal pleasures in thy presence reign,
 And smiling plenty leads the wanton train;
 Eased of her load, subjection grows more light,
 And poverty looks cheerful in thy sight;
 Thou mak'st the gloomy face of nature gay,
 Giv'st beauty to the sun, and pleasure to the day.
 'Tis liberty that crowns Britannia's isle,
 And makes her barren rocks and her bleak mountains smile.

A few years later Addison wrote his "*Campaign*" to glorify the success of the English troops under Marlborough in the great battle of Blenheim (Höchstett) 1704. A short time before England had been visited by a fearful storm which was in everybody's memory when he drew the following picture of the great Duke, calm and serene in the midst of the desperate fight:

That, in the shock of charging hosts unmoved,
 Amidst confusion, horror, and despair,
 Examined all the dreadful scenes of war.
 So when an angel, by divine command,
 With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,
 Such as of late o'er pale Britannia passed,
 Calm and serene he drives the furious blast,
 And pleased the Almighty's orders to perform
 Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm.

The Whig Ministry rewarded the poet by making him secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, but the advent to power of the Tories deprived him of his political honours. This involuntary leisure he used for the great literary enterprise with which his name will for ever be connected: the foundation of the *Spectator*. Addison's friend Steele had embarked in a novel kind of literary venture, a journal "which", as he said, "was to expose the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity, and affectation, and to recommend a general simplicity in our dress, our discourse, and our behaviour." The *Tatler* to which Addison had become a regular contributor, appeared three times a week from the 12th of April 1709 to the 2nd of January 1711. When Addison had returned to London after the loss of his Irish secretaryship, the two friends joined efforts in a greater undertaking, a journal that was to appear daily and to be served up together with the tea and eggs on every breakfast-table in the capital. The *Spectator*, the most celebrated of all journals, appeared daily from the 1st of March 1711 to the 6th of December 1712. It was resumed in 1714 when 80 numbers were added;

but in the interval the *Guardian* had taken up the thread; it extended to 175 numbers.

The Essay forms indeed the most lasting glory of the age of Queen Anne. In France Montaigne had inaugurated this kind of composition and La Bruyère had in his "Characters" held up the mirror to the artificial life of the court of the Grand Monarque. In England Bacon had in his Essays beaten out the goldbars of his vast intellect into sterling coins. But these were small beginnings in comparison with the enterprise of Addison and Steele to appear daily before the public with some original piece of composition, to bring the full power of humour and wit, of sound judgment and rich experience, of judicious censure and brilliant satire to bear on fashionable follies and vices and on social customs in general. On these essays Addison spent a wealth of ingenious invention, fancy, drollery, and pathos. We cannot but admire the machinery which the two authors invented as a frame for their picture of life.

The Spectator is the image of Addison himself, the thoughtful looker-on, the careful student of life's problems, shy and taciturn in society, with a heart full of sympathy and tenderness, *cui nihil humani alienum*. He is the founder of a Club where the representatives of the most different classes of society meet, discuss their views of life, communicate to each other their observations of men and manners, and become themselves interesting to the reader through the events of their lives.

The foremost among these is Sir Roger de Coverley, a full-length portrait of the English country-gentleman, generous, ignorant, loyal, patriotic, and full of prejudice. Next to him Sir Andrew Freeport, the type of an upright, shrewd, methodical, and indefatigable British merchant. Captain Sentry represents the army. Will Honeycomb is the best likeness of the man of fashion in that artificial period. After boasting of fancied encouragement from every reigning 'belle' during the last thirty years, he drops into matrimony with a farmer's daughter at the ripe age of 60.

The conversations and letters of these men give us a vivid picture of English life and character, while they afford to the author an opportunity of discussing a vast variety of social and moral topics in a style which never allows the interest of the reader to flag.

Some of the most interesting papers are: Spectator no. 148, containing a description of the power of the poet's imagination, a specimen of classical English; no. 13 the account of the fight of Signor Nicolini with the lion, an example of charming drollery; and no. 159 the Vision of Mirza or the Bridge of Life, one of the noblest allegories in literature.

It is not too much to say that the Spectator was the most powerful lever to raise the public and private morals of the country out of that degradation into which they had sunk with the Restoration of the Stuarts. So Addison contributed to give England back to herself, to her old Saxon

nature, from which she had become estranged by the political and social ascendancy of France.

But at that time the importance of the work done by the Spectator was not fully realised and the poet was less applauded for this lasting contribution to the literature of his country, than for the drama of *Cato* which appeared in 1713. Constructed as it is with a strict observation of the Unities, written in dignified and sonorous language, and abounding in lofty sentiments, it comes up to the ideal of the classical French drama of the time. Its subject is the last great struggle of the Republicans under Cato against Caesar and the inevitable rise of tyranny. But Addison does not possess the power of breathing life into the creatures of his fancy. This fault was, however, not perceived: the Whigs applauded their own poet as the champion of liberty; the Tories pretended to see in Caesar the tyrant, the prototype of Marlborough. So both factions were pleased.

Addison now reaped the highest honours of a successful career. In 1717 he was made a secretary of state and member of the cabinet, but too shy and fastidious to be able to represent the government in the debates of Parliament he soon retired and lived in dignified leisure with his wife, the countess-dowager of Warwick, in his palace at Kensington. He died at the early age of 47 in the year 1719.

The Comedy at the Time of Queen Anne

continues to reflect the artificial life of the capital, the low moral condition of fashionable society as depicted in the comedies of Wycherley. We do not wonder that the ladies wore masks at the "premières" of the plays of Congreve, Farquhar, and Vanbrugh. William Congreve 1670 (?) — 1729 — was the author of a series of brilliant comedies among which the *Double Dealer* and *Love for Love* are the most famous. We wonder at the absence of every high and noble sentiment, of manly virtue, female honour, truth, tenderness, and affection. His comedies owe their success to the clever intricacy of their plots and to the brilliancy of their dialogue.

After all, it is with a feeling of relief that we turn from the glittering wit, the keen satire, the brilliant play of fancy, the marble polish of style, the cleverness and the learning of the poets of Queen Anne and seek for Nature. The reaction was at hand, the human heart awoke. The scepticism of polite society was swept away in the religious revival which bears the name of Wesley; a passion for nature, for country-life and the description of its simple charms set in with Thomson.

Return to Nature.

Age of George I and George II.

A period of peace followed the convulsion of the War of the Spanish Succession which the genius of Lord Walpole used to develop the resources of England, her home-industry, her worldwide commerce, her colonial empire. A quiet, but rapid progress was made in the accumulation of wealth and in general prosperity. Then it was that the character of the man of business was formed: the hardworking, methodical, thrifty, tenacious, shrewd, bold, yet cautious Englishman who has made England the workshop of the world. Safe from foreign attack, secure at home against the meddling interference of absolutism, proud of his freedom, his country, his labour, and his success the English tradesman and merchant has for the first time in history ennobled the work of mere industry; for the first time the labour of the intelligent and daring engineer, merchant, and tradesman is acknowledged as a pursuit as laudable and distinguished as the work of the soldier, the conqueror. The enormous increase of wealth, material comfort, culture, and political power among the middle classes which resulted from this change made them the centre of English life; and the vast variety of their interests strive to find expression in literature. This is no longer the elegant pastime of the Upper Ten Thousand and the exponent of the life at court, in the capital, in the drawing-room; it expresses the standard of life, the experiences, the moral and religious convictions of hard-working matter-of-fact men who combine strong common sense with a sincere religious belief and a somewhat narrow-minded feeling of duty. As men who spend the greater part of their lives in the work-shop, the counting-house, the office, the study, they long for fresh air, the green fields, the broad and open country. Though the age produces no genius of the first order, it has great claims on our gratitude: to it we owe the glowing descriptions of the charms of Nature in the poems of Young and Thomson, the development of the novel, the rise of the middle-class drama; the reappearance of Milton and Shakespeare.

Descriptive Poetry.

James Thomson

a native of Scotland, the son of the minister of the parish of Ednam near Kelso, was born in the year 1700. He spent his youth amongst the

picturesque scenery of the Cheviot Hills. After some years of study at the University of Edinburgh he went to London to push his fortune. As tutor to a young nobleman he started on his literary career by publishing his *Winter* in 1726, his *Summer* in 1727. In 1728 the whole poem called *The Seasons* was published. In 1731 he accompanied another young nobleman as travelling tutor through France, Switzerland, and Italy. A pension from the government secured his independence. At his suburban residence near Richmond he spent years devoted to poetry and social enjoyment. Some months before his death (1748) appeared his *Castle of Indolence*.

The Seasons present a succession of truthful and highly poetic descriptions of English scenery in its various aspects in the course of the year. The author combines the enthusiasm of the scholar who sees the country only on rare holidays, with the accurate knowledge of the man who dwells in the country and carefully watches Nature in all her moods. He is inspired by Milton whose metre — Blank Verse — he adopts and handles with similar power. In his *Castle of Indolence*, an allegorical poem of great beauty, he imitates Spenser, both in metre and style. Thomson's influence on the German mind is clearly seen in *Kleist's Frühling* and in *Haydn's Jahreszeiten*.

The following passage in which the poet shows us God in the changing aspects of *The Seasons* may be called worthy of Milton:

These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God. The rolling year
Is full of thee. Forth in the pleasing Spring
Thy beauty walks, thy tenderness and love.
Wide flush the fields; the softening air is balm;
Echo the mountains round, the forest smiles;
And every sense and every heart is joy.
Then comes thy glory in the Summer months,
With light and heat refulgent. Then thy sun
Shoots full perfection through the swelling year;
And oft thy voice in dreadful thunder speaks,
And oft at dawn, deep noon, or falling eve,
By brooks and groves in hollow-whispering gales,
Thy bounty shines in Autumn unconfined,
And spreads a common feast for all that lives.
In Winter awful thou! with clouds and storms
Around thee thrown, tempest o'er tempest rolled,
Majestic darkness! On the whirlwind's wing
Riding sublime, thou bidst the world adore,
And humblest nature with thy northern blast.

Edward Young (1681—1765),

an English country parson who for some time exercised an extraordinary influence both on his own country and on German literature. The morbid sentimentality and weariness of the world (*Weltschmerz*) which found its most eloquent representative in Hamlet redivivus and which inspired young Goethe to write Werther's *Leiden* drew the force of its arguments from *Young's Night Thoughts*. Disappointment in worldly success and domestic affliction increased in him a tendency to morbid and melancholy reflection. The nine books of this great but gloomy production show no plot or progressive interest; each is independent of the others. They contain eloquent reflections on the great problems of human life interspersed with fine descriptions of nature.

As an example of the way in which he mixes contemplation with description I quote the passage where he argues in favour of the immortality of the soul from the analogy of nature where there is no death but constant change.

Look nature through, 'tis revolution all;
 All change, no death; day follows night, and night
 The dying day; stars rise and set, and set and rise;
 Earth takes the example. See, the Summer gay
 Droops into pallid Autumn; Winter gray,
 Horrid with frost and turbulent with storm,
 Then melts into the Spring; soft spring with breath
 Favonian, from warm chambers of the south,
 Recalls the first. All, to reflower, fade:
 As in a wheel, all sinks to reascend:
 Emblems of man, who passes, not expires.

Thomas Gray 1716 to 1771,

an excellent classical scholar and a refined and fastidious gentleman passed his life in the college cloisters of Cambridge or travelling through the most beautiful and most interesting countries of Europe, a keen observer of man and manners in past and present, full of sympathy with the insufficiency of human existence. He owes his celebrity to a few truly classical odes which will live as long as the English language is spoken: *The Progress of Poesy*, the *Bard*, the *Ode on Eton College*, the *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*. It is the last of these poems which is characteristic of the tendency of the time to muse on the perishableness of human life and happiness, to measure the shortcomings of finite things by the standard of the infinite and to sorrow over their

insufficiency. This poem has become *The Elegy* in English poetry, and every line of it has become a "winged word". How deeply it affected the contemporary world, may be seen from the fact that General Wolfe, in whose character as in that of Christian Ewald von Kleist the heroic element was blended with the sentimental, recited the elegy whilst rowing up the St. Lawrence river in the night of the 13th of September 1759 to surprise the French at Quebec — an event which led to the conquest of Canada and to the predominance of the English race in America.

When he came to the famous strophe:

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave —

Wolfe interrupted himself saying: "Now gentlemen, I would rather be the author of that poem than take Quebec." Like his German contemporary and brother in Apollo he found his death on the field of battle.

The Drama in the 18th Century.

The development of the drama in England found two great obstacles in its path: the absence of a brilliant and refined court and the Puritan austerity of the middle classes. The Hanoverian Kings were a dull and prosaic race without any claim to the elegancies of life. George I never overcame the feeling of being a stranger in England. George II had reached manhood, when his family was called upon to fill the English throne; his habits were already formed; he took a deeper interest in Hanover than in England, and preferred Herrenhausen to Windsor. George III was indeed an Englishman in taste and manners, but quite a common-place man without any literary taste (Farmer George!), and he reigned for sixty years! His son, Prince Regent during his father's madness, and George IV after his father's death, was a coxcomb without a thought in his head except about his dress and deportment; his brother William IV was a plain and simple sailor. No encouragement to the Theatre could be expected to be given from such princes. There was no recognised centre of taste, no official patronage of the stage.

But the second obstacle was even more detrimental: the widespread opposition offered by religious bigotry. The influence of Calvin had changed the Merry Old England of Elizabeth into the England of Puritans, Presbyterians, Methodists under whose sway the seventh day of the

week, the day of enjoyment and merrymaking, the delight of young and old, the sunny *Sunday* had become the Jewish sabbath with its dull monotony, gloom, and suppressed yawn. In the eyes of the majority of the English middle classes the theatre was a place beset with danger for the chances of salvation. This will account for the fact that in Modern England the theatre has never been so important an institution representing the culture of the nation as it is in France, Germany, and Italy. So we shall not be surprised that so few and comparatively speaking inferior theatres have risen in the provincial towns of England; only in London where during the season the nobility and gentry assemble and where in the vast concourse of millions, people of every religious and political creed and of every nationality are to be found, is there a sufficiently large public for a number of high-class theatres. But just here the absence of a refined and brilliant court to set the example of a high tone and standard of dramatic representation has been injurious to the stage.

As in the course of the first half of the 18th century the centre of gravity in public life gradually shifts from the nobility to the middle classes, a large number of men press forward who claim to be represented on the stage where they wished to see their own interests, their joys and sorrows reflected. Naturally the chief romantic interest of the life of the middle classes is not soaring ambition but the great human motive of action: Love in the middle sphere of life, with its dangers and sorrows, its final triumph or fatal end becomes the chief spring of action in these dramas of middle-class life as well as in the contemporary novel: both appeal to the tender emotions, and many tears have been shed over them. *Thomas Southerne* (1659 to 1746) and *Nicholas Rowe* (1673 to 1718) pave the way for the plays of *William Lillo* (1693 to 1739). His best known dramas are *George Barnwell*, *Fatal Curiosity*, and *Arden of Feversham*.

George Barnwell or the Merchant of London describes the career of a London apprentice hurried on to ruin and murder by an infamous woman who at last delivers him up to justice and to an ignominious death. The play is a powerful picture of life in the city with its dangers and temptations.

Fatal Curiosity may be called a tragedy of fate (*Schicksalstragödie*) and indeed the greatest dramatist of the Romantic School in Germany took from it the subject of his 24th of February. Driven by destitution an old man and his wife murder a rich stranger who has taken shelter in their house, and when the deed is done and they search his body, they discover to their horror that they have killed their own son who had returned to them from foreign parts after an absence of many years. And this happens on a day foretold to them at the birth of their son as fatal to him and to themselves.

About the same time we witness the first beginning of the English opera. Until then the light Italian opera with its shepherds and shepherdesses and graceful ballets had reigned supreme.

John Gay's *Beggars' Opera* is a very clever and witty play written in prose which is constantly but naturally interrupted by songs coming in appropriately like the "couplets" in modern farces. These songs were not set to original melodies but to the favourite popular airs of the time. The opera should be called the *Thieves' Opera*, for it plays in Newgate (the prison of London) and the characters are principally thieves, highwaymen, receivers of stolen goods, poachers, and women to match. The heroine of the play and the favourite of the London play-goers was Polly the sweetheart of a highwayman whose tragical end — arrest and execution — are brought about through the jealousy of Polly and Lucy, both of whom the villain had married. The extraordinary success of the play was due to the bright string of pretty songs which sparkle through the lively dialogue from one end of the drama to the other. The success of the play gave rise to the English opera, a species of light comedy enlivened by songs and music which for a time supplanted the Italian opera with its exotic and elaborate graces.

But the decisive event in the history of the drama in the 18th century was the *Revival of Shakespeare*. In their return to Nature the authors of the period could not overlook the giant who, ignorant of the rules of dramatic composition had come nearest to Nature in the delineation of human character. *Nicholas Rowe* had been the first who again directed public attention to Shakespeare by publishing a collection of his works, adding a few biographical particulars about the great poet. But it was the actor **David Garrick** who revived Shakespeare's dramas on the stage itself and inaugurated the second great period of English acting. Born at Lichfield in 1716 he became a pupil of famous Dr. Johnson with whom he came up to London to push his fortune. A passion for the stage led him to attempt the character of Richard III on the 19th October 1741 which may be called the birthday of that Shakespeare who was to be the load-star of the dramatic poetry of the Teutonic race on both sides of the German Ocean and on either side of the Atlantic. Garrick's merits quickly raised him to the top of his profession to which he gave a dignity which it had hitherto lacked. Moreover he succeeded in the composition of some dramatic pieces like the *Lying Valet* and *Miss in her Teens* with which he inaugurated the *farce*, a kind of sub-comedy in which English dramatic literature is extremely rich. Certain it is that Garrick gave a popularity and importance to the drama which it had not possessed since its palmy days in the reign of Elizabeth; and this spread and asserted itself in Germany where one theatre after another undertook to bring

out Shakespeare's plays, the actors following as closely as possible Garrick's personations of Shakespeare's characters.

Some of the best farces written at this time were *Macklin's Love à la Mode*; *Townley's High Life below Stairs*, an amusing burlesque on the extravagance and affectation of servants in great houses; *Samuel Foote's Lame Lover*.

The Origin of the English Novel.

In its beginnings the Novel is the self-confession of English middle-class life. It is therefore at first quite unromantic, thoroughly realistic. It aims at and achieves the complete delusion of the reader, who is ready to swear that what he reads is sober truth and not fiction. The great founder of the modern novel is

Daniel Defoe, 1661 to 1731.

This English Beaumarchais was the son of a well-to-do London butcher, a Puritan at the time of the triumph of the Episcopalian Church under Charles II. So the son grew up imbued with that hatred of religious oppression and that passionate love of political independence which characterises the opposition under the Stuarts. Here lies the clue to his future career. The suppressed dissenter becomes the advocate of social reform. He took part in the rebellion of Monmouth, escaped to the continent where he led a life full of adventures in Spain, France, and Germany, returned to England and appealed in eloquent pamphlets to the various Protestant denominations to unite against the common foe: King James and the Jesuits. No wonder he hailed with delight the accession of William of Orange. Having failed in business he settled in Bristol and here he wrote his *Essay on Projects* which was equally remarkable for the boldness and novelty of its ideas as for the extraordinary results which it eventually achieved. In this book he lays down the plan of a gigantic banking system, insists on the necessity of increasing public highways and constructing canals, proposes the foundation of insurance companies and of saving-banks. The same Essay contains remarkable schemes of education, especially of girls, and practical proposals as to how the State should contribute to the advancement of Science. Having returned to London he wrote in 1701 his poem: *The True-born Englishman*, in which he refuted the silly attacks directed against William as a foreigner, and for a time enjoyed royal favour. This, however, he

lost at the accession of Anne, who as a Stuart raised the hopes of the High Church party. The clergy preached against the dissenters whose chapels the mob began to destroy. Defoe at once joined in the fray with his masterly satire (1703): *Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, in which he imitated with brilliant irony the savage invectives of the High Church Party. The consequence of this mystification was most serious for the author. He was arrested and condemned by a packed jury to stand for three days in the pillory. But even in prison he continued his literary plans. In prison he founded the first English periodical paper, a review which was to appear three times a week as an exponent and director of public opinion. For two years the author carried on this work in prison. Defoe's *Review of the Affairs of France* — and certainly at the time of the War of the Spanish Succession the Affairs of France were the Affairs of Europe, — survived for 9 years and may be considered as the starting point of English journalism, and as every number issued began with a masterly article from the pen of the author, Defoe may be called the first leader-writer. When he at last emerged from prison he devoted his experience as a man of business and as a politician to the bringing about of the political union of Scotland and England which having been accomplished in 1707, had a marvellous effect on the destiny of Scotland, its wealth and prosperity. The "*History of the Union*" which Defoe published in 1709 is a faithful and highly dramatic record of the event. But the fall of the Whigs in 1711 gave his enemies an opportunity of throwing him again into prison in revenge for 3 pamphlets which he had written in favour of the succession of the House of Hanover. When a few years later the Tories were finally overthrown, Defoe's merits were overlooked, as he was too proud and independent to claim a reward. Then he resolved to renounce politics; the impetuous partisan became a contemplative philosopher. It is to this second part of Defoe's life that we owe the imperishable fruit of his genius. In April 1719 at the age of 58 Defoe published: *The Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*.

A rebellious Scotch sailor, Alexander Seldcraig, born in Fifeshire in 1676, had changed his name after desertion into Selkirk, had taken part in the South Sea voyage of the famous explorer Dampier, had been repeatedly chastised by his captain Stralinding for his refractory conduct, and had at last, when the ship was riding at anchor near the island of Juan Fernandez, absconded into the woods and had lived on the island in utter solitude for 4 years and 4 months, until he was found and brought home to England by Captain Rogers. The

story of Selkirk was published in 1712 in the 'Travels of Rogers and Cook'. It furnished to the poet a mere outline and a few meagre facts. Indeed all the stories of discovery and adventure which were published at that time of the rapid conquest of the earth, had only one aim viz. to excite the curiosity of men, to feed their delight in the marvellous and fantastic. Also the great German novel *Simplicissimus* ends in a regular Robinsonade. But Defoe treats his subject as a great artist. The most improbable becomes natural. His story grows to be the authentic record of an undoubted fact, of a series of real events. And he tells his tale himself, in the first person, and in the most natural manner.

Robinson is the typical Englishman; we find united in him all those qualities which explain the success of his race: the restlessness, love of travel and adventure, the indomitable energy and daring which characterised the Saxon rovers of the sea, the brilliant sea-farers of Elizabeth's time, Raleigh, Drake, Frobisher — — the great explorers of Ocean and Desert — James Cook, Captain Franklin, Livingstone and Stanley. The spirit of conquest is united, in Robinson with the spirit that keeps and develops the conquered ground. His type delights in hard-plodding work, patience, endurance, perseverance which are never discouraged by failure, goes through the task to which he clings, methodically, pedantically; reckoning on success, not after days and weeks, but after years, nay after a life-time of toil. He is moreover the typical Englishman in his stern feeling of duty. His religion is a quiet and sober conviction that man is in constant connection with, and dependence on God; that the most insignificant event in life takes place at the immediate direction of Providence and forms a link in the course of education through which every human being has to pass here below. He is indeed a thorough Puritan considering himself in direct communication with God and in constant danger of the Enemy of Mankind.

But there is yet another interest attaching to the story of Robinson. We survey in this description of the settlement of his island as in a picture the gradual development of the human race. We see how under the force of circumstances Man of necessity rises step by step out of the first state of nature to higher culture and civilisation. When the sailors from the English and Spanish ships settle in the island, Robinson founds a state to maintain peace and order by law, and we observe the growth and development of a commonwealth. At last he introduces into this new state a venerable old priest to preside over the religious interests of the community. Excluding all the creeds which only sow discord and divide mankind, he merely insists on a rational and pious veneration of God and a useful and virtuous life. This preacher of toleration is the prototype of Lessing's Nathan, and the fact that the old religious dissenter Defoe represents here his favourite dream of universal toleration as the summit and key-stone of his new state, justifies us in finding in his Robinson Crusoe a conscious and intentional reflection on, and representation of, the development of humanity in general.

When Defoe had finished his book, he could not find a publisher. At last a certain William Taylor ran the risk and gave the poet 10 L. for his work. *Habent sua fata libelli!*

Samuel Richardson, 1689—1761.

is the founder of the family novel. It was he who ventured to introduce into poetry the middle classes and the intimacy of family life. The reader felt at home among his own people breathing his own atmosphere. At last he had emerged from the land of the stilted knights of the romance of chivalry and the false Arcadia of beribboned shepherdesses.

Richardson was a rich tradesman in the city of London; a self-made man who owed his education and his success in business to his own intelligence, industry, and honesty. He rose to be master of an extensive printing establishment, a highly respectable and universally esteemed citizen of strict morality, somewhat stiff and pedantic, a keen observer of men.

Richardson's extraordinary success rests on three novels.

Pamela, which appeared in 1741, is the story of a handsome and virtuous, but poor girl who served a lady of rank as lady's maid. The son of the lady, amiable but dissolute, tries to seduce her, but fails. Her noble resistance, her excellent conduct, her charms at last disarm her lover who makes her his lawful wife. Virtue is rewarded and drives to church in a guilt carriage.

Clarissa Harlowe which was published in 1748 was Richardson's masterpiece. The plot of the novel of 8 volumes is soon told. Clarissa Harlowe, the ideal of most amiable and elevated womanhood, is to be forced by her cruel relations to marry a rich, but odious suitor. She communicates her sorrows to her affectionate friend, Miss Howe, in a series of letters. Driven to despair she leaves the house of her parents and throws herself on the protection of the man she loves though she fears him, — Lovelace, a clever, amiable, fascinating rake and professional philanderer. By disgraceful arts he attains his end, but his crime bears its own punishment. Clarissa pines away in grief and despair. Lovelace torn by remorse falls in a duel by the hand of an uncle of Clarissa who had not taken part in her persecution.

When Richardson found that his female readers fell in love with Lovelace in spite of his wickedness, he resolved to delineate in a new novel the ideal of a truly virtuous man. This is the origin of **Sir Charles Grandison** (1753). Grandison is a pattern of every perfection, beauty, and all excellence. But his virtue is not the tranquillity of soul which results from a triumph won over the passions after a hard struggle, but he possesses it from the outset, by accident and by the favour of nature and circumstances. He is liberal, but his wealth makes this virtue easy to him; he is affectionate towards his friends and relations, but their attachment renders his tenderness a matter of course; and his temperament is so evenly balanced, that he cannot help abhorring all excesses. But the plot does not lack interesting complications. Grandison is loved by an English woman, Miss Byron, and by an Italian, Clementina of Porretta. The latter wrestles nobly with her passion which is opposed to her religious conviction which forbids her, a devout Roman Catholic, to marry a Protestant. So she buries her hopes and herself in a convent.

Richardson's novels are all of them written in letters in which the men and women represented lay open to us the most secret chambers of their hearts. By entering into the minutest detail of the life and feeling of the creatures of his imagination the author succeeds in creating a complete illusion in the reader. His naturalness and naivety were a relief after the affectation of the prevailing French taste. What we now object to in Richardson, his moralising tendency and maudlin sentiment, was a recommendation to his contemporaries. The whole age considered poetry as a vehicle to edify and to improve. The whole age wept with him virtuous tears to see the good rewarded and the wicked punished. Diderot was inspired by him to write his family dramas, Rousseau takes him for his model in his *Nouvelle Héloïse*, even Lessing came under his spell, his ambition was roused to rival, perhaps to excel him. In *Miss Sarah Sampson* he rivalled him, in *Emilia Galotti* he, perhaps, excelled him. Gellert translated him and imitated him in his „*Roman der schwedischen Gräfin G.*“ and Voltaire mocked at him, but finally followed the lead in his sentimental comedy *Nanine*, a dramatised *Pamela*.

Henry Fielding, (1707 to 1754).

Richardson was the mouthpiece of the somewhat narrow-minded Puritanism and pedantic Philistinism of the hard-working middle-classes. But there was another class of men, representatives of English high-life, who refused to find in Richardson's novels a truthful representation of society. But not only these Upper Ten Thousand, but all those people rebelled against this adoration in whom there was a fresh breath left of the times of Merry Old England. For there is in the English race that healthy, vigorous, indefatigable, and often coarse delight in life, in the play of the muscles, and days of worldly enjoyment alternate with periods of religious revivals. Naturally both sides are represented in literature: Spenser and Shakespeare, Milton and Butler, Wordsworth and Byron, Richardson and Fielding.

Taking up one of Fielding's novels after turning from *Clarissa*, we feel as if we left an overheated sickroom to pass into an open lawn on a breezy day in May. In Richardson our feelings are anatomised, our sensibilities wrought up to the highest pitch. In Fielding English life, the variegated life of his time, is spread out before us. And this life is so rich, so gay, so delightful. He has a robust nature, a splendid constitution, an enviable stomach, an exuberant vitality, a keen sense of humour, an

ever ready wit and at the same time a kind and generous heart. To such a man what a feast is life and how he quaffs the sparkling cup — even to the dregs! Certainly he lacks dignity and sometimes he shocks a delicate reader by his coarseness; but our anger is not long-lived and we forgive him, for he is such a jolly soul, so good-natured and so clever and amusing.

Henry Fielding, the son of a general and grandson of an earl, was placed by his birth among the class that rules and enjoys. But his poverty forced him at an early age to provide for himself. Having been educated at Eton College and at the University of Leyden he came to London to write for the stage. His first play „Love in Several Masks“ appeared in 1727. His handsome face, his manly and noble-looking person, his amiable temperament made him a favourite of society; in fact he lived in the best society of those days and had an excellent opportunity of studying the town-life of the period. Having succeeded in winning a charming wife who moreover brought him a fortune, he for some time played the part of a landed proprietor and country-squire, studying and enjoying the pleasures of country-life. But he quickly disposed of his wife's fortune, returned to London, took the Haymarket Theatre and engaged a dramatic company. When he failed, he determined to become a lawyer; in 1740 he was called to the bar, in 1749 he was appointed one of the justices of Westminster and Middlesex, and showed great energy and decision in purging London from the gangs of thieves that infested it.

But Fielding had to pay by early decrepitude for the excesses of his youth. His health broke down. He went to Lisbon in search of a milder climate, but only to die there in 1754. This short sketch of Fielding's life will account for the wonderful knowledge of English society which the author acquired and displayed in his novels.

It was the extraordinary success of Richardson's Pamela which encouraged Fielding to write his first novel **Joseph Andrews** in 1742. Indeed it is intended to parody Pamela. He considered Richardson as an English Tartuffe, and it was his dearest wish to tear off the mask of hypocrisy which is the besetting sin of English life. To ridicule Pamela, Fielding made Andrews the brother of that renowned lady, whom he brings down from her high pedestal of moral perfection. Pamela, now Lady Booby, is represented as showing the airs of an upstart, whom the parson is compelled to reprove for laughing in church.

Tom Jones, which has been called the first of English novels, appeared in 1750 and is certainly a masterpiece of composition and of delineation of character. The hero of the novel, Tom Jones, is a kind-hearted and good-natured scamp, frank, generous, and brave, but strangely reckless and imprudent. With the variegated and adventurous story of his life a number of personages

are mixed up who are drawn with exquisite and natural truthfulness; the virtuous and benevolent but all too credulous Squire Alworthy, the false and crafty Blifil, the good-natured, but coarse and brutal Squire Western and his affected sister, the dissolute and frivolous Lady Wollaston, and the affectionate mistress of the hero, brave and loving Sophia.

Fielding's third and last novel *Amelia* which appeared in 1751 lacks the rich flow of invention. The ribaldry of Captain Booth, the husband of Amelia, does not attract us like the jovial recklessness of Tom Jones. But the character of Amelia is deeply moving; we admire her affectionate tenderness, her devotion, and indelible love. The scenes between the backsliding husband and the patient and forbearing wife are so true to nature, that we cannot help thinking that Fielding found his models in his own home.

Fielding's novels are a fuller and more vivid account of English life in the middle of the 18th century than we can obtain from the historians of the same period. The picture is not a bright one. Through what scenes of riot, coarseness, social cruelty, and brutality do we pass! But the correctness of the description is corroborated by the memoirs and letters of the time and by the testimony of such painters of manners as Smollett, the novel writer, and Hogarth, the caricaturist.

Tobias George Smollett, (1721 to 1771),

a native of Scotland, of good family but poor, studied medicine and took the post of under-surgeon on board a ship of the line and sailed for six years all round the world. But failing as a physician he came out as an author.

In 1748 appeared his first novel *Roderick Random*, in 1751 *Peregrine Pickle*, then his translation of *Don Quixote*, then a *History of England*, and at last his most famous novel *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* in the year of his death 1771.

As an artist Smollett ranks below Fielding; he lacks that grace and wisdom with which his great rival carries the most entangled situations victoriously to their natural solution. His characters are wild, coarse, without tenderness and decency. Adventures follow adventures; the single incidents of the story in their wild and restless whirl are only held together by the thread of the biography of the hero. He has evidently taken for his model the Spanish vagabond novel and Le Sage's *Gil Blas*. His novels want unity of action. But this deficiency is compensated by the wealth and power of description. In the description of maritime life Smollett's novels are the fountain-head from which all modern poets have drawn. It is evident that his novels with their personages, incidents,

and descriptions have grown out of the personal experience of the poet. And so they have become an indispensable illustration of contemporary history.

Laurence Sterne 1713—1768

stands quite apart in English literature; he ranks with Rabelais, Cervantes, Jean Paul as one of the great masters of humour. Humour has its name from the moist element, it is a liquid. And indeed it dissolves all solid bodies; it saps and washes away all that appears great and imposing in the eyes of the world. What claims the admiration of the world is exhibited in all its hollowness and false glitter; what seems insignificant, what is overlooked or despised by the world is revealed in its eternal worth and beauty. The humourist seeks the genuine, the true, be it ever so small and weak; he broods over it lovingly. He fights against deception and falsehood, be it ever so great and strong, — he laughs it to scorn, but not from malice or misanthropy, but with pity, with love, and forgiveness in his smile. True humour exalts, refreshes, encourages us, because it shows that the world with all its shortcomings and contradictions deserves our love, and that life is still worth living.

Sterne, born in Ireland, was the son of an Irish lieutenant. He entered the church and obtained the living of Sutton in Yorkshire, where he lived for nearly twenty years reading, painting, fiddling, and shooting. It was there he wrote his famous novel *Tristram Shandy* which appeared between 1759 and 1762. Then he made two journeys through France and Italy which supplied him with material for his *Sentimental Journey* which appeared in the year of his death, 1768.

Sterne is one of the standard-bearers of that intrepid band of poets who strove to find back the way to Nature out of the mazes of the artificialities of conventional society and who brought about a revival of the heart with the true and natural feelings of humanity, a rebellion of the Germanic spirit of the North against the Pseudo-classicism of France. They usher in the literary movement which reached its height in the works of young Goethe breathing Sturm and Drang. Their great ally is Shakespeare's Hamlet, the great Germanic dreamer and humourist, pondering in the church-yard scene over the skull of Yorick, the incomparable jester, and looking with pity into the abyss of human misery. Sterne introduces himself in his poetry as a descendant of this Yorick, the delight of Hamlet's youth. Parson Yorick in *Tristram Shandy* is no other than Sterne himself.

Tristram Shandy is one of the greatest and at the same time one of the oddest creations of poetry. Sterne seems to think that each of us has his hobby-horse and that our childhood has survived in our riper years and even in old age, so that indeed "the child is father of the man". But all the oddities which he describes rest on the firm foundation of indelible love and real kindness of heart. Father Shandy, the Mother, Uncle Toby, Corporal Trim, Parson Yorick, Doctor Slop, Susan, Widow Wadman — each of them is a thoroughly genuine and loveable original cut out of the very kernel of human nature. This is why we read *Tristram Shandy* with inward pleasure and are happy in the company of Sterne's characters in spite of the absolute want of constructive skill of the poet who is unable to build up a well connected story. The important constituent of the epic interest which arises from the fable or the action is discarded or even turned into jest. The book begins about a year before the birth of the hero and ends when he leaves off wearing long clothes.

As a work of art the *Sentimental Journey* ranks higher than *Tristram Shandy*.

It is Sterne who coined the word "sentimental" for which Lessing proposed the German word *empfindsam* which he thus launched on its course. "Sentimental" Sterne calls his journey because its object is not a description of the countries visited with their scenery, art, history, and legend; what he wishes to give is a description of his inner experiences, impressions, sentiments evoked by the scenes visited: not the objective world, but his own Ego affected by the outer world is to be represented. "My journey is a quiet journey of the heart after Nature and after such emotions which rise from it and which impel us to love our fellowmen, nay the whole world, more than we do." In these short sketches of Yorick travelling through France and Italy the whole soul of the poet with its strange mixture of softest tenderness and enjoyment of the pleasures of life freely opens up its most hidden depths.

The extraordinary appreciation Sterne found in Germany may be seen from the following passage quoted from "Goethe's *Maximen und Reflexionen*": Yorick Sterne war der schönste Geist, der je gewirkt hat; wer ihn liest, fühlt sich sogleich frei und schön; sein Humor ist unnachahmlich und nicht jeder Humor befreit die Seele. Diese hohe und wohlwollende Ironie, diese Billigkeit bei aller Übersicht, diese Sanftmut bei aller Widerwärtigkeit, diese Gleichheit bei allem Wechsel, und wie alle verwandten Tugenden weiter heißen mögen, erzogen mich aufs löblichste, und am Ende sind es doch diese Erinnerungen, die uns von allen Irrschritten des Lebens wieder zurückführen."

Oliver Goldsmith 1728 to 1774.

In 1766 appeared the English novel which marks the height of the movement of return to Nature and which made the deepest impression on the contemporary world: *The Vicar of Wakefield*, the story of the simple life of a virtuous country-clergyman. 4 years later young Goethe, then a student at Strassburg, thought to have found the originals of the Wakefield family in Parson Brion at Sesenheim and his daughter Friederike with whom he had fallen in love.

The author of the *Vicar of Wakefield* is like Sterne an Irishman, with all the peculiarities and foibles of his race. The light-hearted gaiety of temper, the good-natured humour, the reckless want of care and order and sustained industry, the love of jolly company, the expensive habits of life, as e. g. his extravagance in dress — all this betrayed his Hibernian descent. His father, the original of the Vicar, was a poor country parson who brought up nine children, loving all the world and fancying that all the world was good. Oliver led the life of a light-hearted adventurer, trying one profession after another, failing from want of perseverance in whatever he undertook. Some years he spent in travelling on the continent, his only equipment being a flute with which he earned a night's lodging and a meal.

How often have I led the sportive choir,
With tuneless pipe, beside the murmuring Loire!
Where shading elms along the margin grew,
And freshened from the wave the zephyr flew;
And haply, though my hard touch, faltering still,
But mocked all tune, and marred the dancer's skill,
Yet would the village praise my wondrous power,
And dance, forgetful of the noontide hour.

Such scenes formed an appropriate school for the poet. He brooded with delight over these pictures of humble primitive happiness, and his imagination loved to invest them with the charms of poetry. Having returned to England he tried the profession of a chemist, a doctor, a corrector in Richardson's printing shop, an usher in a private school. At last he resolved to live solely by his pen, and success came. He published his *Chinese Letters*, a very amusing critique of European society by an intelligent Chinaman. Then followed his highly successful *History of England*. In 1764 appeared his beautiful poem *The Traveller*, the cornerstone of his fame. In 1766 he published the *Vicar of Wakefield*. Then he produced his first comedy *The Good-Natured Man*, then his *Roman History*, in 1770 his *Deserted Village*, one of the most charming idylls ever written; lastly in 1773 his excellent comedy: *She Stoops to Conquer*. At last his goal was reached; his name stood among the foremost of contemporary authors. But difficulty and distress clung to him. From heedless profusion and from a benevolence which knew no bounds he was hardly ever free from debt and had to write taskwork for the booksellers to keep himself afloat: a History of England in 4 vs, a History of Greece, a History of Animated Nature. Yet when he was cut off in 1774 at the early age of 46 he left a debt of £ 2000.

He owes his fame to the unaffected ease, grace, and tenderness of his descriptions of rural and domestic life, and to a charming vein of philosophic reflection. He revels in images of quiet beauty, comfort, benevolence, and simple pathos which are congenial to his own character and experience. Though not a poet of the first order he has more than any other endeared himself to his readers, because he throws a poetic glamour on the ideas and feelings dearest to an Englishman, — the delights of home and of nature. In this respect Goldsmith is the connecting link between Thomson and Cowper and found a strong echo in Germany, of which we find traces in the poetry of Goethe and Bürger, and above all in Voss' *Louisa*.

In the *Vicar of Wakefield* the age which thirsted for the truth and simplicity of nature found its ideal realised. People read with delight of the kind and honest country-clergyman who never for a moment swerves from his sincere love of mankind, from faith and charity even while he has to pass through the severest trials; of his excellent wife, of his lovely daughters Olivia and Sophia, of his two sons, George, the strolling adventurer, and Moses vying with his father in naïve kindness and artless simplicity, and of the two little favourites of their father, Dick and Bill! The story itself is very simple; in fact the art with which the plot is built up, is very inferior, for it is full of improbabilities, nay actual impossibilities. But these we forget over the charm which the author throws on the family-circle and the imposing, yet loveable central figure. In this character the poet has collected and harmonised the best features of the manners and morals of his time and his country, and so he succeeds in making us love and admire a pious, well-regulated, domestic, disciplined, and laborious rustic life. Protestant and English virtue has not produced a more amiable type. Religious, affectionate, a close reasoner he reconciles dispositions which seem destined to exclude each other; a clergyman, a farmer, a paterfamilias, he exalts characters which seem only fit to appear in the family novel or in comedy.

Literary Criticism.

The great critic of the 18th century was **Samuel Johnson**, 1709 to 1784, who exercised an influence on contemporary literature quite out of proportion to his own literary importance. The fact is that his influence was due to his original personality. He was the domineering centre of Literary London, imposing his views by the power of close reasoning and of moral rectitude on an audience which he forced to listen and to obey.

He owed this extraordinary power to his wide knowledge of facts, his clear common sense, his lofty moral character, his implacable dogmatism, his thundering eloquence. His conversation exercised a strange

fascination on the 'Wits' of the time, one of whom, *Boswell*, preserved his "*Table Talk*" as carefully as Busch that of Bismarck at Versailles. His books are not very numerous, for this giant in conversation was lazy and indolent and preferred reading, ruminating, and giving forth oracles to his friends, to steady work for the press. "*The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*" 1777/81 is a standard work which laid down the law for a whole generation, though posterity has judged very differently of the heroes of Johnson. His moralising novel "*Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*" and his essays in the periodicals *Rambler* and *Idler* only represent Johnson's views of life. But the English-speaking race on both sides of the Atlantic know him above all as the great lexicographer. His great *Dictionary of the English Language* appeared in 1755.

Johnson's ponderous well-cadenced sentences, his love of high-sounding, long words of Latin origin have left a lasting impression on the style of English authors, and in America especially Johnsonian English may still be heard.

Revival of the English Past, Prelude to the Romantic Movement.

The return to Nature which led back to a revival of Milton and Shakespeare, went beyond them into the English past and opened up an understanding and an appreciation of the Middle Ages, by which the great romantic movement was prepared which set in 'about the end of the century.

Bishop Percy published in 1765 his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, a collection of old ballads and love-songs which revealed the extraordinary wealth of true poetry hidden in these popular songs. Herder, Bürger, Goethe were deeply impressed with their power and beauty and found in them the models of their own ballads. The two great literary forgers of the middle of the 18th century, Chatterton and Macpherson, proved by their poems which treated of romantic antiquity that the classical spirit had had its day.

Thomas Chatterton pretended to have discovered a number of mediaeval ballads which he ascribed to a monk Rowley. The highly gifted boy ended at the age of 17 by suicide.

But the most successful forgery in the history of literature was that of the Scotchman James Macpherson (1738 to 1796) who between 1760 and 1763 published a collection of songs which he pretended to be translations from Gaelic originals collected by himself from the mouths of the Celtic Highlanders and which represented the poetical legacy of a certain

Ossian, the son of Fingal, a Celtic bard of the 3rd century. "Fragments of ancient Poetry, collected in the Highlands of Scotland" was followed by a second part "Fingal" and a third part "Temora". The success of Ossian's Poetry is the most characteristic feature in the great reaction of sentiment against common sense which ushers in the revolt of the Germanic spirit against French Voltairianism which had predominated in the first half of the 18th century.

Ossian's Songs seem to be the dirge of the Celtic race. These shadowy heroes and heroines flit in the pale light of the moon over the wild heaths of Scotland and mourn the downfall of their national greatness, they seek a paradise that is irretrievably lost. It is this sentiment which like the churchyard sadness of Gray appeals to the Hamlet mood of the time and lets Ossian find such enthusiastic reception in the Germany of Sturm und Drang. For Herder and Goethe who read Ossian with rapture at Strassburg in 1770, he is as great as Homer, the very voice of nature. And so we find a whole song translated in the gospel of sentimentalism, Werther's *Leiden*.

The return to the English past inspired *Thomas Warton* to write his "*History of English Poetry*", 1774—78, which has remained a standard work of its kind.

Philosophy, History, and Political Economy advance during this period with rapid strides. *David Hume* 1711 to 1776 is great as a philosopher and historian. In philosophy he is a sceptic and a materialist; in history he shows himself a disciple of Voltaire in his hostility to the church. He wrote a "*History of England*" from the earliest times to the accession of the Tudors. This work had been preceded by a *History of the House of Stuart* and was followed by a *History of the House of Tudor*. *William Robertson* 1721 to 1793 published a *History of Scotland* embracing the reigns of Mary Stuart and of James VI, and a *History of Charles V.*

Edward Gibbon 1737 to 1794 wrote a great work on the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, which deals with the history of Rome and Byzantium from about 180 A. D. to the fall of Constantinople,

In 1776 appeared the epoch-making work of *Adam Smith* 'The Wealth of Nations' which laid the foundation of the new science of national economy.

Political Eloquence, the Power of the Press. The government of the country by Parliament and chiefly by the House of Commons which had been secured for ever by the Revolution, and the rising importance of Public Opinion represented in journalism, developed two new literary forces which were destined to exercise the greatest influence on English society: *Public Oratory* and *the Political Press*. The leader of the majority

in the House of Commons, henceforth the soul of the English government, owed his proud position to his eloquence, to the force of his arguments. The leader of His Majesty's opposition wrestled with him, trying to refute his arguments, to thwart his measures. It was the art of speaking, of marshalling reasons, of convincing, of carrying away by a passionate appeal to patriotism or to self-interest which decided the battles of oratory of these Great Commoners, and we still listen with rapt attention to those debates which as Cowper says 'set the great wranglers free'. Lord Chatham, the great ally of Frederick the Great, Edmund Burke, Pitt, Fox, and Sheridan, Canning, Robert Peel, Lord Palmerston, John Bright, Gladstone, and Disraeli — what a brilliant line of great orators, as great as Cicero and Demosthenes!

But these parliamentary battles are prepared, recorded, and reviewed in the daily papers and in the periodical press, in which all the world-wide interests of the rapidly and wonderfully rising and spreading British Empire are discussed, and soon the keenest intellects of the nation enlist in the service of the Political Press as leader-writers, as reporters, as regular or occasional correspondents; and the great Reviews and the leading newspapers — such as the *Quarterly*, the *North British*, the *Edinburgh*, the *Saturday Review*, the *Athenaeum*, the *Times*, the *Daily News*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Standard*, the *Morning Post*, and innumerable other papers offer a vast amount of information, criticism, and enlightenment.

The most remarkable production of political literature in the 18th century are the *Junius Letters* which appeared from 1769 to 1772 in the Public Advertiser; altogether 69 letters published under the pseudonym of Junius, (probably a certain Philip Francis), in which the author pleads boldly and eloquently for the freedom of the elections and for the liberty of the Press and of judicature.

Next in importance as a political writer ranks the great orator *Edmund Burke* whose furious denunciation of the first General Governor of India, Lord Warren Hastings, and whose *Reflections on the French Revolution* caused him to be called the English Cicero. In 1770 he published his *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, a treatise in which he urged that justice should be done to the American Colonies which the folly of the English government was rapidly driving to rebellion and ultimate defection.

FOURTH PERIOD.

Modern Literature (Part II).

Robert Burns and William Cowper.

The English nation stirred with new life-forces now gives birth to a generation of truly great poets in whom Nature speaks with a power unfelt since the death of Milton. On the threshold of the new century stand Burns and Cowper, both truly representative of their countries, of Scotland and of England.

Robert Burns,

the peasant poet of Scotland is the greatest lyric poet in English literature. He was born in the same year with Schiller — 1759 —. Though there seems to be little resemblance between the naïve minstrel of rustic life and the high-souled philosophical poet of Germany, they had in common the burning hatred of political, religious, and social oppression and a firm belief in the great ideals of humanity. Truth and passion are the great forces working in the soul of Burns, allied to a marvellous sensibility. He feels the lightest touch of the Genius of Nature, as the Aeolian harp answers to the softest breeze that sweeps over its strings. His heart is open to every impression, but especially to all that is sublime, beautiful, sweet, and tender. He is full of sympathy with all creation, a loving heart, seeing his fellow-creature not only in every human being, but also in the smallest animal, and even in inanimate nature, in every tree and every flower. Such a heart would feel all the ecstasies and all the agonies of love, and indeed no poet has treated the tender passion with greater truth, with sweeter charm.

Whilst thus deeply versed in human nature his sympathies are with the national heart of Scotland. In this national raciness lies his secret strength. He is indeed the melodious voice of his country. The Scotch love of independence thrills in his verse, that passionate love of freedom which lent strength to this small people in its long and bitter strife against England and against religious oppression. He adores Scotch scenery, however bleak and barren it may appear to the Southron. With rapture he watches the chasing clouds and ever-changing lights on the brown moors, rugged hills, and rock-bound lakes. With voluptuous awe he listens to the thundering waves of the Atlantic beating on the cliff-fretted coast. The earth-smell of the fresh sod turned up by his plough-share, the dewy balm of fields and meadows, the sweet fragrance of the wild heath-flowers appeal to his inmost sense.

Above all he feels the pride of the labourer in his work. He has the strong feeling of home and its endearments; reverence for old age, chivalrous feeling towards the women of the household, loving-kindness to children. But he would not be the truest representative of the Scotch genius, if he had not his full share of the fanciful humour, the rollicking jollity of his people. This quality spices his poetry with a seasoning of strong individuality. The merry twinkle in his eye, the playful twitching of his mouth form a beautiful contrast to the deep and solemn pathos of which he is capable.

Robert Burns was born at Alloway in Ayrshire as the son of a poor but respectable farmer. He received a good elementary education which was, at that time, in Scotland alone within the reach of the poorest peasant. He nourished his youthful imagination with some English poets, but above all with the popular songs and ballads of Scotland. A strong, handsome, lively, and irresistibly amiable lad he was the boon companion of all jolly fellows and the desired lover of many a country beauty. Whilst he walked behind the plough, his soul held communion with all that is beautiful in nature and man. His passion for the lovely milkmaid of Montgomery was turned into sorrow through her death and this grief deepened and sanctified his poetry. Being unsuccessful as a farmer he was planning emigration to Canada, when the first publication of his early poems in 1787 suddenly made him famous all over Scotland. He was invited to Edinburgh and became the lion of a season. He could now buy a farm near Dumfries and marry, but again he failed as a farmer, so that he was glad to accept a miserable post as exciseman in the port of Dumfries. Unfortunately he had contracted habits of intemperance,

which working on an overtaxed constitution, undermined his originally vigorous frame, and like Mozart, Raphael, Byron, the unfortunate poet died at the age of 37, in 1796.

Ever since his death his fame and appreciation have spread. He not only throws the glamour of his genius, his tenderness, his sweetness, his humour round the humblest home of Scotland, but he accompanies the reckless soldier to the distant battle-fields in India or at the Cape, the rough sailor on the farthest ocean, the hardy squatter and gold-digger in the wilds of California and Australia, softens their hearts and lends a gentler music to their rude joy.

The dialect in which the poems of Burns are written, the Lowland Scotch as spoken in Ayrshire, offers some difficulty to Englishmen and foreigners alike, yet a great part of their naïve charm and sweet fragrance depends upon this homely and heartfelt expression of the poet's feelings. When Burns writes in ordinary English, he seems to move along with fettered feet, there is something laboured about his style which chills us. The rich music of his heart does not flow fully except when he "warbles his native wood-notes wild".

The patriotic note is struck in *My Heart's in the Highlands* and in *Bannockburn* (Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled); the idyll of the Scotch farmer's life lives before us in *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, from which I quote the following stanza:

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
Th' expectant wee things, toddlin', stacher¹, thre'
To meet their dad, wi' flichterin'² noise an' glee,
His wee bit ingle³, blinkin' bonnily,
His clean hearth-stane, his thriftie wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
And make him quite forget his labour an' his toil.

'*Auld Lang Syne*' is sung all round the world whenever old friends meet again or have to part. 'John Anderson, my jo'⁴, John, is the most faithful picture of wedded love holding fast to the end.

John Anderson, my jo, John,
We clamb⁵ the hill thegither⁶;
And mony a canty⁷ day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither.

¹ stagger. ² fluttering. ³ fire-place. ⁴ love. ⁵ climbed. ⁶ together.
⁷ merry.

Now we maun¹ totter down, John,
 But hand in hand we'll go;
 And sleep thegither at the foot,
 John Anderson, my jo.

The songs addressed to a Mouse and to a Mountain-Daisy turned up by the poet's ploughshare show his deep sympathy for every creature. *His Highland Mary* and the song addressed to *Mary in Heaven* are the most beautiful love-songs of the English language. From the former I quote the second stanza:

How sweetly bloom'd the gay, green birk'
 How rich the hawthorn's blossom;
 As underneath their fragrant shade
 I clasped her to my bosom!
 The golden Hours, on angel wings,
 Flew o'er me and my dearie;
 For dear to me as light and life,
 Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Of his rollicking jollity and his humour the following poems are characteristic specimens: *John Barleycorn*, — A Ballad; *The Jolly Beggars*, and the awful witch-tale of *Tam o'Shanter* who loved to drink deeply, begins with the following lines:

When chapman billies² leave the street,
 And drouthy neibours,³ neibours meet,
 As market-days are wearing late,
 An' folk begin to tak' the gate;
 While we sit bousing at the nappy,
 An' gettin' fou and unco happy,
 We think na on the lang Scots miles,
 The mosses, waters, slaps, and stiles,
 That lie between us and our hame,
 Where sits our sulky, sullen dame,
 Gathering her brous like gathering storm,
 Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

William Cowper.

The first painter of modern English life and especially of the manners of the great middle classes of his country is William Cowper. To him they turn to see their ideal of life reflected. His is the deep and passion-

¹ must. ² lads. ³ drowsy neighbours.

ate love of country and its quiet pleasures, the enthusiastic delight in nature in all her moods, the fondness of home and the sweet and simple joys of the fireside with the gentler affections nestling around it, the pride in the history and in the political freedom of England, and above all the strong veneration towards the Creator and the deep feeling of duty which has always distinguished the broad middle classes in England. Cowper is not a grand or daring genius soaring into the regions of powerful or sublime passions. The sober common sense, the quiet simplicity and respectable mediocrity, the domestic affections, the every-day life of a good and sensible Englishman who is a shrewd but kindly observer of life and manners, such is the sphere of his poetry which resembles a quiet and deep river, reflecting in its mirror not the sublime world of the Alps or some terrific thunderstorm, but the sweet and homely though somewhat tame scenery of English landscape.

His life has a melancholy interest. His sensitive and nervous nature prevented him from taking any active share in life and subjected him to the wild terrors of an overstrained imagination which plunged him again and again into gloom and madness. He was born of an excellent family in 1731. The loss of his mother when he was only six, was the first blow he received; her kind and beautiful face haunted him in after-life and one of the noblest effusions of his poetry is devoted to her picture. His disease broke out for the first time when he was called upon to pass an examination in order to prove his qualification for a clerkship in the House of Lords. The first attack which took the form of religious melancholy lasted 18 months; three times this madness returned up to his death in 1800. He would have died long before this time and with him the unborn children of his genius, had he not found kind friends who offered him a home and most patient and persevering kindness. From 1766 up to his death he lived with the widow and the daughter of the Rev. Morley Unwin at Olney in Buckinghamshire. In this quiet retreat he revived; rambling about the country, drawing, gardening, musing, and writing poetry.

Cowper's greatest poem is the *Task* which appeared in 1785 written at the instigation of a certain Lady Austen who asked the poet to write some Blank Verse and playfully gave him the sofa for a subject (hence the name: the task). The *Task* is a reflective and descriptive poem in six books.

In the *first book* he starts with a humorous description of seats, from the stool to the sofa, but glides into the description of a walk in the country, and

draws a strong contrast between rural and city life, lavishing loving praise on the former, for as he says:

God made the country and Man made the town. *The Second Book*, called the Time Piece, opens with a powerful denunciation of slavery; the poet boldly claims the emancipation of slaves in the English colonies.

We have no slaves at home — then why abroad?
And they themselves, once ferried o'er the wave
That parts us, are emancipate and loosed.
Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free,
They touch our country and their shackles fall.
That's noble and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
And let it circulate through every vein
Of all your empire; that where Britain's power
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.

He writes at the time of the American War of Independence, when England, through the folly of the Tory party then in power, lost her splendid colonies. Whilst the poet deeply deplores the mistakes of his country, he clings to it with passionate devotion through good and evil:

England, with all thy faults I love thee still —
My country! and while yet a nook is left,
Where English minds and manners may be found,
Shall be constrained to love thee.

The most interesting book is *the fourth*: *The Winter Evening* which contains a delicate and truthful picture of an English home. The early winter twilight has descended on a quiet valley in the heart of rural England. Suddenly the stillness of the clear and cold winter evening is broken by the twanging of the horn; the postilion deposits his bag filled with letters and newspapers to be carried to the secluded country firesides. What may he bring, this messenger of fate? And now let us draw the curtains and move the seats to the fire, assembling round the hissing tea-urn and the cups "that cheer but not inebriate" and let us welcome peaceful evening in. And then let us with the true-born Briton's eagerness turn to the Newspaper.

"But oh, th' important budget! usher'd in
With such heart-shaking music, who can say
What are its tidings? have our troops awaked?
Or do they still, as if with opium drugg'd,
Snore to the murmurs of th' Atlantic wave?
Is India free? and does she wear her plumed
And jewell'd turban with a smile of peace,
Or do we grind her still? The grand debate,
The popular harangue, the tart reply,
The logic and the wisdom and the wit
And the loud laugh — I long to know them all;
I burn to set th' imprison'd wranglers free,
And give them voice and utt'rance once again.

And in the following description of a sheet of the Times we have indeed the abstract and epitome of English life and its varied interests. And how charming to look into this turbulent and seething world as it were through a telescope from the safe retreat of a country residence whilst the household affections freely unfold themselves around the blazing hearth!

In this poem the keynote of modern English poetry has been struck by the hand of genius: it is the truthful reflection of actual life, not indeed a life of extraordinary excitement, great struggles, violent passions, but the life which the majority of Englishmen lead. Its ideals are the joys of home, the pleasures of a healthy out-of-door existence, practical goodness, belief in God, a strong interest and pride in the public life of the nation.

With Cowper begins the long line of poets who make English life as it is their subject. They are the friends and every day companions of the educated Englishman; but their influence is restricted to their country. The great romantic and revolutionary poets — Scott, Byron, Shelley, — have a cosmopolitan power, they have brought the whole world under their spell. In England their influence has been very strong for a time, but it has soon subsided. Those poets who are essentially national retain their hold over the nation, just as the fixed stars continue to glow with a steady light, whilst the eccentric comets run their brilliant course, the wonder of a few nights, and then disappear. The first of these quiet, but enduring lights in modern English literature is William Cowper.

The Drama.

The great painter of the manners of the second half of the eighteenth century was the same **Richard Brinsley Sheridan** who has been mentioned before among the great orators of the time. He was born at Dublin in 1751 as the son of a distinguished actor. Since 1769 he studied the law in London, but having fallen in love with an actress of the Dury Lane Theatre and having married her after two duels with a rival, he abandoned the law and began to write for the stage. His great comedies *The Rivals*, 1775, *the School for Scandal* 1777, *the Trip to Scarborough*, and *the Critic* show that Sheridan is undoubtedly the greatest among the writers of comedy in England since the days of Shakespeare and that his plays may justly claim to be ranked with Molière's best comedies of manners.

But he had a higher ambition and wished to distinguish himself in the political arena. He edited a Whig paper 'The Englishman' and having entered Parliament in 1780, he became one of England's greatest speakers.

He seconded Burke in the great impeachment of Warren Hastings and Sheridan's speech against the Governor General of India is considered one of the greatest displays of forensic eloquence. When after the death of Pitt the Whigs came into power, Sheridan became Secretary of State. But he had always lived the reckless life of the literary adventurer. Gambling, betting, drinking hard, extravagant in his expenses, always in debt, he is indeed like his friend the Prince of Wales — afterwards King George IV — the type of that wild and lawless society which drank the cup of pleasure to the dregs. He died a beggar in 1816, was followed to his grave in Westminster Abbey by the highest personages of the realm, and Lord Byron devoted to him a Monody, which was recited before an audience in tears in Drury Lane. The English society of the Rococo age lives before us in his comedies. The characters stand out before us as vividly as in the pictures of Gainsborough; the dialogue is carried on with admirable spirit and flashing wit; while the plot is being built up with masterly skill.

The School for Scandal is generally considered his masterpiece and as it deals with a foible common to human society in general, it has made its way round the world. Ill-natured cavil at the weaknesses of our neighbours, back-biting calumny, social slander are to be found everywhere: many a reputation has been torn to shreds in the amiable conventicles of fashionable society; — still I believe that English society has a peculiar privilege in this respect, a superior neatness and skill in using the most dangerous of all weapons, the human tongue. Perhaps it is the Pharisaic feeling of moral respectability and special religiousness which makes it a pleasure to cry down our dear neighbour who is loved so much in the abstract and is so little loved in his concrete form of flesh and blood. But Sheridan does not want to write a tragedy; he will hold scandal up to ridicule, will amuse us at the expense of the sneering backbiter, but not exhibit the heinousness of the sin and the misery it may bring about. He does not, like Molière, show us a misanthrope who Timon-like retires from the base rabble of mankind, but lets truth and genuine goodness triumph over deceit, slander, and hypocrisy which he laughs to scorn.

The Novel.

In the interval between Goldsmith and Scott we count about twenty novelists of sufficient mark to be remembered. Of these no fewer than 14 are ladies. It is an interesting fact that the great social upheaval, which took place in the latter half of the 18th century, lifted the women out of the sphere of toys and drudges to the position of rational, thinking, influential members of society. They snatch at the wider possibilities of

education, of higher culture now within their reach, owing to the increasing prosperity of the country, and the novel was the first outwork of the fortress of literature which they seized.

The novels of the period may be grouped in three classes.

The first we may call *the Gothic novel*, aiming at the representation of the picturesque and terrible features of the life of the Middle Ages. In these novels we may see the dawn of Romantic poetry in England. The beginnings of the movement we find in Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* and in Miss Reeve's *Old English Baron*, but it attained its full development in the fictions of *Mrs. Radcliffe* which appeared between 1790 and 1797. In these novels we see a reaction against classic modes of fancy and composition, a letting loose of the imagination upon Nature in her grandest and wildest recesses and upon the unbridled workings of passion. Her novels — *Sicilian Romance*, *Romance of the Forest*, *the Mysteries of Udolpho*, *the Italian* — are indeed of a wholly fantastic kind of Gothic art with no foundation whatever in actual knowledge of mediaeval history. She may be called the *Salvator Rosa* of the novel.

The second class of novels contained an embodiment in fiction of those social speculations and aspirations which had sprung out of the French Revolution as observed from the other side of the Channel. The ideas of liberty, equality, fraternity, of the iniquity of existing institutions, of human progress and perfectibility filled many minds and sought to reveal themselves in literature.

In 1794 *William Godwin* published his novel „*Caleb Williams or Things as they are*“ which was a poetical exposition of the vices of existing society, a general review of the modes of domestic and unrecorded despotism by which man becomes the destroyer of man.

But the majority of the novelists of the period were what their predecessors had been, painters of life and manners with more or less humour, and more or less moral purpose. The progress in style may be attributed to the fact that women brought their peculiar tact of perception, and their peculiar notions of what is right and tasteful to the task of representing society. Among these lady novelists *Miss Edgeworth* and *Miss Austen* were undoubtedly the first in talent; they resemble Richardson in minuteness of observation, in good sense, in clear moral aim. *Miss Austen's Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, and *Emma* are among the most charming works of fiction in the English language.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Followers of Cowper, the Lakists.

On the threshold of the new century a number of poets of considerable merit, distinguished by truth and sincerity, followed the example of Cowper in endeavouring to reflect nature in her various moods, life in its natural relations of the simple affections, home with its joys and sorrows, love of England and her institutions, positive faith in the old religion. To all this they added a dash of metaphysical speculation derived from German philosophy. The poetry thus produced has a healthy and elevating effect; its truthful simplicity often touches the heart, but it wants passion and power and that sensuous element which no great artist can dispense with.

In his moralising and descriptive poems *George Crabbe* (1754—1832) sets before the reader scenes from the country and from humble life marked by fidelity to nature and startling realism. The most celebrated are: *The Village*, *The Borough*, *Tales of the Hall*.

The poetry of *Samuel Rogers* (1763—1855) a rich banker in London whose house was the rallying place of men of genius, is characterised by perfection of form. In his *Pleasures of the Memory*, in his *Human Life*, and in his *Italy* we recognise the man of widest sympathies, of profound culture.

In 1799 appeared *Thomas Campbell's Pleasures of Hope*, a series of beautiful and dazzling pictures and reflections of a pure and elevated moral feeling in vigorous versification. His war-songs and patriotic odes which gave utterance to the feelings of the English at the time of the great war against Napoleon, became, however, still more popular.

These poets were thrust into the background in their own province of poetry by three men whom accidental intimacy and the fact that a great part of their lives was passed in the lake district of Cumberland and Westmoreland have caused to be grouped together as a school under the name of *The Lakists*. The fact is that the three men thus described Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, have hardly anything in common with one another, least of all a set programme of poetical plans and convictions. The most important of them is

William Wordsworth

who, little known and appreciated at first, has come to be considered by some enthusiastic worshippers the greatest, by all thinking men certainly

one of the foremost representatives of modern English poetry. He was born at Cockermouth in Cumberland in 1770, received a good education, studied at Cambridge, travelled in France and Germany, and was at first carried away by his enthusiasm for the liberation of the world through the French Revolution. But the excesses of the Jacobites and the rapacious foreign policy of France both under the Republic and under the Empire rapidly cooled his enthusiasm, so that he like his friends became a champion of conservative principles in church and state. Wordsworth passed his life with his congenial sister and at a later time with his wife far away from the haunts of men and the struggle of worldly passions in some little cottage in the midst of quiet and romantic scenery, first in Somersetshire where he formed an intimate friendship with Coleridge and Southey (who had married two sisters), then at lovely Grasmere in Westmoreland, at last from 1813 to his death in 1850 at Rydal Mount on Rydal Lake, — a long life of poetical meditation without struggles, passions, temptations, storms and shipwrecks. One great all-pervading feeling glows through all his being, giving light and warmth: his passionate love of Nature. And what is Nature to him but the living body of the Deity? The all-sustaining essence of Divine Thought reveals itself alike in every created being. The more we think on it in its various revelations in nature, the more it works itself out in us and illuminates us. His poetry reflects his inner life in constant interchange of inspiration with Nature with whom he feels himself one. All created beings bear alike the stamp of the Deity and are equally suggestive of poetry. There is no high and low. The meanest peasant, pedlar, beggar is as poetical as emperor, knight and fine lady. So the great drama of the life without, of the great world with its stirring changes has no interest for Wordsworth as a poet.

He has no exciting stories to tell, no warring passions to paint. The calm mirror of his soul reflects the picturesque and sublime, the sweet and lovely spectacle of mountain, field, and wood. The voices of simple human beings telling of their quiet joys and sorrows rise above like the carolling of the lark or the sighing of the wind in the trees; his own soul soars higher still to hold communion with clouds and stars in deep and solemn meditation. His style is of studied simplicity. His poetry is description, meditation, expression of deep feeling at a time when Scott wrote his stirring tales of adventure and Byron shook every heart with the representation of fiercest love and hate. The greatest work of Wordsworth, *the Excursion*, with its deep musings, lengthy descriptions and meditations is little read. Most people content themselves with knowing

his sweet and simple lyrics and ballads such as *The Highland Girl*, *The Solitary Reaper*, *She was a Phantom of Delight*, *Sonnet on Major Schill*, *Sonnet on Milton*, and his masterpiece, *Lines composed on revisiting Tintern Abbey*, where he describes his passion for nature in his youth in the following powerful self-confession:

For Nature then

To me was all in all. I cannot paint
 What then I was. The sounding cataract
 Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
 Their colours and their forms, were then to me
 An appetite, a feeling and a love,
 That had no need of a remoter charm,
 By thought supplied, or any interest
 Unborrow'd from the eye.

The poet contrasts this wild, passionate, pain-fraught happiness with the deep and reverential love with which Nature now, in his riper years, inspires him, suggestive of the purest and noblest thoughts. This great poem is an example of Wordsworth's estrangement from the world. Much though we admire the lofty harmony of his nature, we cannot help thinking that in this flight into solitude in order to revel in the beauties of nature and to listen to the music of the spheres, there is a touch of that selfishness which drove the hermit away from the duties and temptations of life; away from his struggling and writhing fellow-creatures in order to think only how to save his soul.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1772 to 1844.

At the end of the 18th century the genius of Germany at last revealed itself to Western Europe. Lessing had founded the art of literary criticism in his brilliant and subtle enquiries into the character of the French drama in comparison to that of ancient Greece and Shakespeare. Herder, Bürger, Goethe had ransacked the great store of popular poetry, ancient national songs and ballads of the whole of Europe, but especially of the northern races, and had thus thrown open the hitherto closed gates of mediaeval poetry, through which the enthusiasts of the Romantic School rushed to bring forth the treasures of the so-called dark ages. The interest in foreign literatures had been roused and the idea of a World Literature originated in the heads of German scholars and poets like Herder, Goethe, and Rückert. Coleridge was under the spell of this great movement,

but he had also drunk of the new German philosophy at its fountain-head. The noble and lofty genius of Schiller had roused his admiration. Coleridge is the first Englishman who brought the force of German aesthetic and metaphysical speculation to bear on Shakespearean criticism in his enquiries into the psychological problems represented in Shakespeare's characters; he is also the first to interpret to the English public the master-piece of the new dramatic literature, *Wallenstein*, in a translation which has not found a rival in his country. It must be admitted that the life of Coleridge was a sad failure and that his literary work was altogether fragmentary. Though his mind was capable of achieving great things, he lacked the firm will, the steadiness and perseverance, the capacity of systematic labour which are necessary to produce a complete and finished work of art. Gifted with an exquisite instinct for true poetry and a wonderful insight into the working of genius in other poets, he himself produced only unfinished sketches illuminated with strange flashes of genius.

The greater part of the life of Coleridge was spent in poverty and vain attempts to obtain some independent position amidst disappointment and ill-health, increased by the excessive use of opium. At last he found a refuge and a home in the house of his friend W. Gillman of Highgate in the north of London, whose hospitality he enjoyed for 19 years up to his death in 1844. It was here that he exercised the greatest influence on the contemporary world by the magic charm of his conversation. As fifty years before around Dr. Johnson, so the literary men of London used to assemble around Coleridge in order to listen to his inspired monologues.

Coleridge is like Lessing in the first place a great critic; he stands unrivalled in the art of penetrating into the full meaning of a work of poetry, of throwing light on every nice shade of thought, feeling, expression, melody.

As to his poems, many of them betray very high and original power and his language is rich and musical. He appears at his best in those romantic tales which he fills with wild and weird imagery in verses of marvellous modulation.

Such pieces are *Christabel* and the *Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*. The supernatural element in this latter poem is based on the superstition of sailor life and the illusion produced by his descriptions of the terrors of the sea is as great as that produced by Bürger's *Leonore*.

"Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea.

All in a hot and copper sky
The bloody sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath, nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

Robert Southey, 1774 to 1843.

The third in talent, the first in worldly success among the three Lakists, was a voluminous writer out of whose ready pen flowed dramatic, lyric, epic poetry, essays and biographies, historical and philosophical works in rapid succession. But in spite of his extraordinary versatility he has not succeeded in leaving any lasting impression of his genius in English literature. In his enthusiastic youth when he struck up his friendship with Coleridge, he dreamed of founding an ideal republic in America and wrote a violent revolutionary poem on Wat Tyler, the demagogue under Richard II. But like his friends he soon abandoned his socialistic ideals and became a zealous supporter of conservative principles at home and abroad. He received a pension from the government as poet laureate which increased by the earnings of his pen not only secured his independence, but enabled him to exercise that noble generosity with which he sheltered his brother-in-law and other poor relations.

His most famous poems were metrical tales of wild and romantic interest, which were most popular at the time when the East had been thrown open by the Conquest of India and by Napoleon's Expedition to Egypt, and when the stirring events of the Middle Ages revived in the poems and novels of the Romantic School. The first was an epic poem on *Joan of Arc*; then followed *Thalaba the Destroyer*, an Arabian fiction of great beauty. In 1810 appeared his master-piece: *The Curse of Kehama* which plays in India; Kehama being a kind of Hindoo Faustus who obtains and sports with supernatural power. In 1814 Southey published *Roderick, the Last of the Goths*, a noble poem in which the great struggle between

Christians and Saracens and the downfall of the power of the Visigoths are beautifully described.

But Southey soon lost his hold on the public. Gorgeous and sublime as some of his images and descriptions are, they come like shadows and so depart. He is a stranger to the real life of man with his passions and emotions. His experience is derived from books, not from life itself.

The Romantic Movement.

The classical taste which had prevailed in Europe since the Renaissance and which had been intensified by the pseudo-classical poetry of France, by the rationalistic influence of Voltaire, and by Winckelmann's enthusiasm for Greek art, was both in England and in Germany, at the end of the 18th century, fiercely and successfully driven out. Yearning for truth and nature the poets of both these countries penetrated into the remote past of their own history. The dark cloud of ignorance which had covered the Middle Ages, began to lift and in the dim twilight the eye of genius descried strange and fantastic forms, great passions, and events which struck the imagination more powerfully than the thread-bare traditions of antiquity. After Reason had been deified, Faith and Fancy craved to have their turn. But „Das Wunder ist des Glaubens liebstes Kind“, and a world of wonders arose: the age of chivalry, of devoted faith, of honour and love, when the world was young, full of the ardour, passion, belief, and wild imagination of youth. Then the wizard took up his wand and pronounced his spell:

„Mondbeglänzte Zaubernacht,
Die den Sinn gefangen hält,
Wundervolle Märchenwelt,
Steig' auf in der alten Pracht.“

Tieck.

And it did rise once more in all its glory with its Gothic castles frowning down from rocky heights, its minsters and monasteries, its crowded towns with gabled houses and narrow, teeming streets, its battles and sieges, its feasts and tournaments, its shows and splendours, its dungeons and horrors, its gallant knights on prancing steeds, the lovely lady in her bower, the hermit in his cell, the wild green-wood with its enchanted well, giants and dwarfs, uncouth monsters and lovely fairies.

The great wizard of the North who spoke the magic word and whose fictions were for thirty years the delight of Europe, was

Walter Scott.

Born in Edinburgh, the most picturesque and romantic capital of Europe, he was by both his parents connected with some of the oldest and most distinguished families of his country, a circumstance which gratified his pride and raised his interest in the history and traditions of Scotland. Whilst the proud consciousness of his connection with a nobility which had ruled the country in the feudal age, made him a conservative and a Tory in politics, his religious belief was from his childhood influenced by the stern Calvinism of his father, and though the breadth of his views and sympathies prevented him from being a fanatic, he could not help sympathising with the presbyterians in their struggle against Roman Catholicism and the Stuarts. So Walter Scott reconciled in his own person the opposites of political toryism, nay conservative romanticism with those Calvinistic tendencies which were held by the middle classes of Scotland; and thus, a Tory by heart and imagination and a Whig by conscience and reason, Scott could faithfully and impartially represent the two sides of Scottish life in the past. And there existed for him something beyond and above political and religious parties: Scotland itself, his beloved fatherland, with its barren mountains and stern poverty apparently the step-child of nature, and yet how grand and fascinating in its wild and weird beauty, its eventful and turbulent history, full of fierce struggles, awful disasters, splendid triumphs! Scotland was indeed the great passion of his life which not only made him a great poet, but discovered his country to the rest of the world. Burns endeared Scotland to the Scotch, Walter Scott revealed and endeared it to every educated man in Europe.

The greatness of Walter Scott lies in his extraordinary power of inventing and telling a story; his narrative flows along like a broad and smooth river, moving on calmly but irresistibly to its end, without rapids or whirlpools; it mirrors on its surface men and times and scenes, with clearness and fidelity. It is true the river is not deep. Scott does not deal with great passions and difficult problems of life and character. His story interests us, entertains us pleasantly, charms, delights us, but it does not touch us to the quick; it does not stir up our deepest thoughts and feelings with regard to the problems of our own heart, of society, of fate. But such as he was he suited his age. The idle and dreaming European society of his time, recovering from the fearful catastrophes of the Napoleonic Era and wishing for nothing but peace, was fascinated by the great

story-teller who sent forth picture after picture of the Romantic past of his country. But when after the events of 1848 Europe was once more in the throes of new struggles, was bent on the solution of new social and political problems, and looked out for new men to do justice to their strangely troubled existence, Walter Scott's poems passed out of the hands of men and women into those of boys and girls. And yet those same riper readers of former times sometimes grew weary of the strife and noise of clashing theories, wrangling classes and warring nations and would take up with a sigh of relief the Lay of the Last Minstrel or Quentin Durward and abandon themselves once more to the old spell. For indeed Walter Scott is the noblest and the most fertile representative of the Romantic school in European poetry, who has enriched the lives of millions of the men of his generation.

Scott did not distinguish himself as a boy in the ordinary school course, but he was an insatiable reader. During a long stay in the country in the Scottish border-land his imagination feasted on the old border ballads collected by Bishop Percy, and he rapidly acquired an extraordinary miscellaneous knowledge of the feudal age. Like his great rival, Walter Scott was lame, but more fortunate than Byron his deformity did not prevent him from taking exercise on foot; on the contrary it was his favourite delight to ramble about in order to explore the scenes famous in history or legend, to study the manners of Lowland peasants and Highland clans, and to revel in the wild beauty of Scotch scenery. His patriotism blazed forth when England was threatened with a French invasion, he joined a regiment of volunteers and showed himself a smart cavalry officer. He was to have become a lawyer like his father, and like Goethe he actually exercised his profession for some time. But he soon obtained the appointment of Sheriff of Selkirkshire which post secured his independence, whilst it left him time to devote himself to literature.

His first publications were translations from the German: a translation of Bürger's Eleonore and Wild Huntsman and of Goethe's Götze von Berlichingen. His next work was a collection of ballads which appeared under the name of *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. At length in January 1805 he published his first great Romantic poem which placed him at once in the foremost rank of poets:

The Lay of the Last Minstrel, a metrical tale in 6 cantos. Scott's conception of the Minstrel inspired by Goethe's Sängers, is very beautiful, and the picture of the venerable old man led by the boy who carries his harp, might adorn the

title page of a collection of Romantic poetry. The old man comes to the castle of Newark, where he sings before the widow of the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth (the illegitimate son of Charles II who died on the scaffold), the daughter of the Duke of Buccleuch — the head of the house of Scott — about an event from the glorious past of her house, which took place in the 16th century, when a fierce border-feud raged between the warders of the border, the English house of Carr and the house of Buccleuch, which, after Lord Walter had been slain, was represented by his widow, the Lady of Branksome, by her infant son, and by her daughter Margaret. The latter is in love with young Lord Cranstoun, the head of a rival clan, who had made common cause with the Carrs; but her mother who sits nursing her grief and her revenge in Branksome Tower, would rather see her daughter dead at her feet than give her to the man she loved. But in the border-war with the English barons the young heir of Buccleuch falls into the hands of the English. The feud is to be decided by single combat between two famous chiefs, Musgrave and William of Deloraine. If the latter should win, the young Lord should be restored to his mother. But Deloraine who had been despatched by the Lady of Branksome on a secret mission to fetch the magic book of the great sorcerer Michael Scott buried in the chancel of Melrose Abbey, had been sorely wounded in a combat with Lord Cranstoun and could not answer to the call of the herald when the lists were opened. At this anxious moment there appeared on the Scotch side a stately knight with lowered vizor who killed the English champion and led the heir of Buccleuch back to his overjoyed mother. But when he took off his helmet, all recognised Lord Cranstoun. Then the Lady of Branksome's pride was quelled, and she consented to give her daughter to the enemy of her house, whose heir he had restored.

The tale derives its chief interest from the magnificent description of feudal society, its loves and hates, its beliefs and superstitions. Splendid are the opening passages of the different cantos in which the minstrel gives a prelude on his harp to prepare his audience for the coming scene. I quote as an example the introduction of the VIth canto:

Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
 Who never to himself has said,
 This is my own, my native land!
 Whose heart has ne'er within him burn'd,
 As home his footsteps he has turn'd,
 From wandering on a foreign strand!
 If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
 For him no Minstrel raptures swell;
 High though his titles, proud his name,
 Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
 Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
 The wretch, concentred all in self,
 Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
 And doubly dying, shall go down
 To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
 Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung.

In 1808 appeared Walter Scott's second great poem, *Marmion*, which shows a great advance in the power of delineating character and of painting strong and tragic situations. *Marmion* is a bold soldier and an unscrupulous politician at the court of Henry VIII who atones for his crimes by a noble death in the cause of his country in the famous battle of Flodden Field (1513), where the merry monarch of Scotland, James IV, prompted by a romantic feeling of chivalry, allowed the English army to cross the Tweed, and paid for his rashness with his life.

In 1810 the poet published his *Lady of the Lake* with which poem Walter Scott reached the height of his power. King James V, the son of the unfortunate king who fell at Flodden, was famous for his gallantry to the fair and for his affability to the people. The poet describes a chase in the Highlands near Loch Katrine where this king loses his way, his steed, his companions, and claims hospitality on an isle which lies in Loch Katrine, where the Earl of Douglas, once the king's guardian and tutor, had found refuge with his nephew Roderick Dhu, the head of Clan Alpine, when he had incurred the king's displeasure and had been declared an outlaw. Here on Loch Katrine, during the absence of the Earl, the king, who introduced himself under a fictitious name, is kindly received by his daughter, fair Ellen, the Lady of the Lake. She is loved not only by the king who wisely and nobly controls his passion, but also by fierce Roderick Dhu, her kinsman, whilst she herself has fixed her affection on young Malcolm Graeme. Her love adventures and the terrible battle between Clan Alpine and the Royal army, the overthrow of Roderick Dhu in single combat by King James, the final reconciliation of the king and the Earl of Douglas, and the happy marriage between Ellen and Malcolm Graeme form the plot of the poem, the beauty of which lies in the many grand and sweet passages describing the romantic scenery and manners of the Highlands. The description of Loch Katrine in the light of the setting sun and in the silvery light of the moon, the morning on the lake with the triumphant return of the victorious clan across its waters, the quarrel of the two rivals for Ellen's love, Ellen's sweet hymn to the Madonna in the solitary mountain cave, the run of the fiery cross over hill and dale to summon Clan Alpine to arms, the fierce duel of James and Roderick at Coilantogle Ford, the bard's description of the battle in the Trossachs whilst Roderick expires, — these are scenes which stamp themselves indelibly on the memory.

In his following poems, *the Vision of Don Roderick*, *Rocheby*, *the Bridal of Triermain*, *the Lord of the Isles*, *Harold the Dauntless* —, Walter Scott maintained his reputation, but did not add to it. It gradually became clear to himself and others that the vein was exhausted; so he wisely withdrew in time to change his armour. When he appeared again in the lists it was with his novel *Waverley*, the first of a series which were destined to make his name a household word in every educated home in Europe. *Waverley* appeared in 1814, his last novel *Count Robert of Paris* in 1831. In these 17 years Scott wrote his 29 novels. *Waverley* appeared anonymously; perhaps the poet had some doubts about its success remembering that the public are apt to classify its favourites after their first impressions

and are prejudiced against a work from the same pen which does not correspond to their preconceived notions.

The choice of the subject was eminently happy. The famous attempt of *Charles Edward* in 1745 to recover the throne of his ancestors was in the memory of all Scotland. The dashing young prince was still a favourite with high and low. Even those who did not approve of his religion and his politics, pitied his misfortunes and loved to talk of his romantic adventures. At the time of the rising the Highland clans on whose assistance the prince chiefly depended, still retained their ancient laws and customs, their Celtic speech, their dress, their wild and romantic character. It was in fact the defeat of the Young Pretender which overthrew their national independence, and from that time the Celtic inhabitants began to disappear. So we may say that the rebellion of 1745 was the glorious sunset of the Celtic race in Scotland, and that Walter Scott threw the halo of his genius on the event. And at one stride the author rose to the height of his task to be the master of *the historical novel*. He avoids the mistake of other novelists of making the hero of history also the hero of his novel, involving a historical character in merely fictitious incidents. Nor does he make him the centre of the plot. In Scott's novels the historical character and his time only form the background of the picture, heightening our interest by lending the story the additional charm of historical facts and personages. The heroes of the love-story which always appeals to our *deepest* sympathy, are purely *imaginary* characters. In *Waverley*, the young English officer who travels in Scotland and is by chance mixed up with the Stuart rising in which he finally takes part from personal sympathy for the Pretender, and the two ladies who love him, gentle Rosa Bradwardine and the high-souled enthusiast Flora Mac Ivor are children of the poet's fancy; they move along in the great historical event and their destinies are affected by it, but they do not in any way interfere with the historical event such as it was.

Walter Scott develops *his plot* slowly and carefully. With great minuteness and apparent prolixity he describes the time, the scene, the characters whom he sets in motion. At first the action hardly seems to advance; suddenly the story is led up to its crisis, our flagging attention becomes keen and eager; we begin to understand that all the apparently diffuse and irrelevant descriptions of the first part of the novel were necessary and carefully arranged. When he has led the story up to this point, developing at the same time his characters to their full force, his own interest in them and the story seems to subside, and he hastens to end his tale. *His workmanship* is most conscientious; every chapter is a finished picture, has its beginning, its middle, its end.

His novels may be grouped under two heads: those which deal with the *Romantic period* of European history in general, and those which are *purely Scottish*. As to the former, his interest is concentrated on the Feudal Age. The time of the Crusades is represented in *Count Robert of Paris*, *the Talisman*, *Ivanhoe*. With the 15th century deal *Quentin Durward*, *Anne of Geierstein*, *the Fair Maid of Perth*; with the 16th the *Monastery*, *the Abbot*, *Kenilworth*; with the 17th the *Fortunes of Nigel*, *Woodstock*,

Old Mortality (the Presbyterians), with the 18th *the Heart of Midlothian*, *Rob Roy*, *Waverley*. Purely Scottish without important historical characters or events are *Guy Mannering*, *the Antiquary*, *the Bride of Lammermoor*, *the Pirate*.

With regard to the historical novels we must confess that *he idealised the feudal age*, both manners and men. Only the outward appearance of the time in costume and scenery is faithfully portrayed; the feelings, speech, actions of his heroes have been civilised and arranged for the refined taste of modern society. His heroines are always touching, always correct, and his heroes must be young gentlemen such as Evandale, Morton, Ivanhoe, Tressilian — well-bred, tender, and grave, even slightly melancholy, and worthy to lead those young ladies to the altar. His mind was not of the philosophic or speculative type. When he tries to paint a Cromwell, a Louis XI, an Elizabeth, it seems as if he could but give a certain exterior account of the physiognomy, costume, and gesture, but had no power to work from the inner mind outwards, so as to make these characters live. He stops as it were on the threshold of the soul and in the entrance-hall of history; he chooses in the Gothic past which he represents only that which is pleasant and becoming, tones down the naïve coarseness of its language, its unbridled sensuality, its fierce brutality; as they appear in Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris*.

Walter Scott's *true greatness* lies in those novels which deal with purely *Scottish subjects*. When he represents homely or heroic Scottish characters living in a time near his own, when he describes Scottish life and humours, Scottish beliefs and modes of thinking, he is entirely successful. It would be easy to enumerate more than a dozen characters which are as perfect creations of poetic genius as any in the whole range of literature, such as Dandie Dinmont and Counsellor Pleydell, Oldbuck, Edie Ochiltree, Jeanie Deans, Cuddie Headrigg, Meg Merrilies, taken from *Guy Mannering*, *the Heart of Midlothian*, and *the Antiquary*, which are undoubtedly his greatest works. Here in these novels as a painter of Scottish nature and interpreter of Scottish thought and feeling he attains to the height of genius. What Fritz Reuter did for humdrum Mecklenburg, Scott has done for the infinitely more interesting country of his birth.

But his most glorious creation was his *Castle of Abbotsford*, this romance in stone which he raised on the banks of the Tweed and where he practised princely hospitality, doing to all the world the honours of his country. There indeed his position as a very prince of literature was unrivalled. But in 1826 the bankruptcy of the publishing firm of James Ballantyne and Co in Edinburgh, in which he had been a sleeping partner put an end to this dream of greatness. Scott owed to the creditors of the firm the enormous sum of £ 117 000 and he resolved to pay it off to the last penny. And now he sat down to write for money, to clear off at the age of 55 a debt of such an amount; and he had almost succeeded when his overtaxed brain gave way. He died on the 21st of September 1832.

Prophetically he had sung of his own death in the words of the Last Minstrel:

Call it not vain, they do not err,
Who say, that when the Poet dies,
Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,
And celebrates his obsequies:
Who say, tall cliff and cavern lone,
For the departed Bard make moan;
That mountains weep in crystal rill,
That flowers in tears of balm distil;
Through his loved groves that breezes sigh,
And oaks in deeper groans reply;
And rivers teach their rushing wave
To murmur dirges round his grave.

Lord Byron, 1788 to 1824.

The rival poet at whose appearance Walter Scott gave up writing poetry and began to write his prose-romances, was George Gordon Noel Byron, son of an officer in the guards, of an ancient and noble family; disgraced however by deeds of extravagance and violence. His mother Katharine Gordon, a lady of an ancient and celebrated Scotch family, an heiress, was soon ruined by her dissolute husband and left him with her boy who had been born on the 22nd of January 1788. She lived in Scotland on a mere pittance saved from the wreck of her fortune. She was a hot-tempered and unreasonable creature, absolutely unable to educate a high-spirited boy. In 1798 there came a change. The grand-uncle who had hitherto ignored the poor child at Aberdeen, died and the estate of the Byrons and the peerage descended upon the boy in Scotland. But the blessing was not unalloyed. The estate was heavily mortgaged, so that Byron's income was always out of proportion to his social position; indeed the poet was hampered by money difficulties, which were at last removed by the sale of the estate in 1817 and by the large sums which he received for his books.

His character betrayed at an early time his passionate temper, and there was nobody to direct his education with a strong hand. Byron grew up in inner loneliness and proud seclusion, unbefriended, unguided, untamed. The precociousness of the boy showed itself in his early love affairs with Margaret Duff, with Margaret Parker, with Mary Ann Chaworth; the last of which passions he immortalised in the beautiful poem „the Dream“.

The boy went to school at Dulwich and Harrow, studied at Trinity College, Cambridge, then returned to his country-seat of Newstead Abbey. At Harrow he distinguished himself by his promiscuous reading and his splendid recitation and won the admiration of his school-fellows by his pluck and generosity. At college and on his estate he passed his time in eccentric revelry with a band of wild young friends. It was at this time, in 1807, that he ventured to publish his *Hours of Idleness*, a collection of youthful poetry which was ruthlessly and unfairly criticised in the powerful Edinburgh Review. The sensitive young nobleman chafing under disappointment, answered with the satire *English Bards and Scottish Reviewers* in which he made a furious onslaught not only on his critical detractors, but also on all contemporary poets in general, Walter Scott included. This experience confirmed him in his intention to leave England for a time; so when he had come of age and had taken his seat in the House of Lords, he set out on a travelling tour in the South and East of Europe. His personal disappointment — a Lord and poor; a man proud of his good looks, yet deformed by a lame foot; a poet of great aspirations, yet hooted down by unfair critics; a burning heart, yet solitary, — now took the shape of a melancholy weariness of, and disgust with, the world in general. In this mood he left his country on the 11 of June 1809, landed in Lisbon, traversed the Peninsula on horseback, embarked again at Cadix, landed in Albania, rode across the wild mountains of Hellas to Athens, paid a visit to Constantinople and the site of Troy, where he swam across Hellespontos, and returned to England on August 1, 1810. His mother had died during his absence. On the 1st of March 1812 when all Europe was anxiously watching the great preparations of Napoleon for his campaign against Russia, there appeared in London in Murray's publishing firm a book containing not more than about 200 stanzas which for a moment made the British public forget its political anxieties. Every reader felt that here a Napoleon had arisen in the world of poetry who had won the day at a single stroke. The book contained the two first cantos of Byron's *Childe Harold*. But where was the charm which sufficed to convince the English reader that a poet of the first power had arisen?

Childe Harold is in reality nothing but the diary of a traveller who roams through the most interesting scenes of Europe hallowed by nature, art, poetry, legend, and history: the seats of ancient culture round the Mediterranean. This traveller enjoys not only to the full all the associations of the past and the beauty of scenery, but he feels also the keenest sympathy with the actual inhabitants of those regions, with their sufferings and struggles and with their aspirations

after political independence. And with what poetical power does he not enliven his descriptions! He breathes the passion that swells his own breast into inanimate nature. In these same lines are heard the war-cry and the death-groans of struggling nations and lives the undying beauty of the great works of ancient art. And all these impressions are reflected in the mirror of a soul now torn by fierce contempt of the world, now yearning for the happiness and freedom of man, now pining for love and human sympathy. For the central figure of all the scenes represented is always the same partly attractive, partly repulsive, but always grand and fascinating character of the poet himself. Not the objective world itself appears in this poetry as in that of Goethe, but its trembling reflection on the troubled surface of the poet's passionate soul. And these poetical effusions are thrown off carelessly, with marvellous facility and grace: an improvisation streaming irresistibly from an unknown depth in a wild but harmonious melody.

The poem is written in the *Spenserian stanza*, a metre which Byron handled with playful facility. *The first canto* takes us through the Periinsula at the time when Spain waged a desperate war against the French conqueror. The poet winds his glowing descriptions up with a magnificent representation of a bull-fight. *In the second canto* we follow the poet past the Ionian isles to the shore of Albania, and this wild and as yet absolutely unexplored region is described with wonderful power. In fact Byron felt most at ease in semi-barbarous countries where a powerful personality, a strong and imperious will still enforce respect and win authority. Thus he knew how to impress and how to win the favour of the great Ali Pascha of Janina whose romantic court he describes. Then we follow him to Greece which is still groaning under the yoke of Turkey. Like a stream of living fire his pathetic complaint pours itself out in song and wakes in Europe an echo, rousing that universal sympathy which a few years later helped the Greeks to wrench themselves free from Turkish chains.

„I awoke one morning and found myself famous“, the poet could say after the appearance of these two cantos. In fact he became at once the idol of fashion, flattered by men, adored by women. It is astonishing that, in the whirl of pleasure in which he lived he found time and inspiration to write that magnificent series of *Epyllia* or Metrical Tales from the East: the *Giaour*, the *Bride of Abydos*, the *Corsair*, *Lara*, the *Siege of Corinth*. A new world revealed itself to the European public: the *unknown East* with its grand and lovely scenery, its fierce passions, its men of gigantic moral stature, not yet dwarfed by civilisation, great in their virtues and in their vices: ambition, love, jealousy, revenge, despair. And rising over the stormy sea of fierce struggles and emotions towers the Medusa-head of the poet, fascinating alike through its beauty and the expression of pain and scorn.

The year 1816 brought the crisis of Byron's life. In the preceding year he had married a certain Miss Isabella Milbanke, daughter of a

wealthy banker. She had been brought up in strictly Puritan principles and had perhaps nourished the hope of converting the famous libertine.

Very soon she thought her husband stark-mad and after the birth of her daughter Ada, she went with her child on a visit to her family from which she never returned. A divorce was the result. Then followed one of those revulsions of public feeling or rather public conscience which sometimes shake English society with elementary power. The same people who had courted and petted the poet, turned away from him like the Pharisee from the Publican. He was ostracised, and quietly accepted the decision of his country, firmly resolved to go abroad and never to return. So the bands which tied him to his native land, its beliefs and institutions were severed and Childe Harold set out once more on his pilgrimage, his melancholy deepened, his contempt of man increased.

In the *third canto* of his *Childe Harold* which took up the thread of the poem dropped six years before, the knight is again on the ocean; he had tried to live among his fellow-men, but had to rue it dearly. So nothing is left to him but Nature.

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;
Where roll'd the ocean, thereon was his home;
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime extends,
He had the passion and the power to roam;
The desert, forest, cavern, breakers' foam,
Were unto him companionship; they spake
A mutual language, clearer than the tome
Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake
For Nature's pages glass'd by sunbeams on the lake.

One year after the great battle he stands on *the field of Waterloo* and conjures up a wonderful picture of the grand event. The sphinx-head of Napoleon rises in awful majesty. In him he sees above all that restlessness of genius which refuses to be controlled, that fever of the heart, fatal to the world and to itself. The description applies equally to his own fate.

But away from such scenes of havoc to *the sweet banks of the Rhine*, the glories of which he sings in the famous poem addressed to his beloved half-sister Augusta. From there he continues his flight to Switzerland and revels in the beauty of *the Lake of Geneva*. A thunderstorm breaks over the lake. Here the poet is indeed in his element. He rides the blast in the very heart of the storm like the awful spirit of the tempest.

The poem attains its climax in the *fourth canto* written in *Italy* where the private grief of the poet dissolves into a pathetic lamentation on the vanity of human existence in general. At that time Italy lay prostrate at the feet of foreign and domestic, secular and priestly tyrants. The spectacle of a noble people bleeding to death in the midst of the great ruins of ancient power and

all the wonders of art and nature, gave the poet a welcome theme for the eloquent expression of his own sorrow. Never have the melancholy beauty of Venice, the loveliness of an Italian summer-night, the romantic scenery of the Apennines, the sublime grandeur of the Eternal City been sung in more passionate and loftier verses. We wonder how the poet can find a subject worthy to conclude his song. Yet he succeeds; from the top of the Alban mount he beholds the blue sea stretching around this land of beauty, and he bursts out in the magnificent hymn to the Ocean, the image of the Eternal.

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean, roll!
 Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
 Man marks the earth with ruin — his control
 Stops with the shore; — upon the watery plain
 The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
 A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
 When for a moment, like a drop of rain,
 He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
 Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

To Byron's stay in Switzerland we owe *his first drama, Manfred*. By Shelley whom he met at Clarence — another outcast of English society —, Byron had been initiated into the glories of Goethe's Faust. The drama worked on his mind and led him to conceive a somewhat similar character.

The greatness of the drama lies in the powerful representation of the character of Manfred with his wild melancholy, repentance and despair, and in the magnificent description of Alpine scenery with its terrors, its grandeur, its sublime beauty. But a deep gloom lies on the whole work; it is steeped in darkness; no light, no smile, not a trace of humour illumines the scene. Manfred dies in despair; nor does his death kindle any hope in us for a brighter future either for the soul that is swallowed up by the deep gulf of eternity, or for the human race that remains behind; whilst Faust works out his salvation both on earth and in heaven. Ever aspiring, striving, working, he at last finds satisfaction in exerting himself on behalf of his fellow-men and is received into Heaven for: Wer immer strebend sich bemüht, den können wir erlösen.

On the Lake of Geneva Byron wrote his *Prisoner of Chillon*, a noble poem inspired by his visit to the submarine cell of the Swiss patriot Bonnivard who was kept here a prisoner for many years by the cruel Duke of Savoy. As it is a noble ode to freedom written without any morbidness or affectation, this poem has become a great favourite of the English public, especially with the young.

From the winter of 1816 to 1817 to the end of 1823 *Byron lived in Italy* — Venice, Ferrara, Florence, Rome, Venice again, Ravenna, Pisa, Genoa. Live and let-live was the watch-word of a society which tried

to forget in frivolous pastimes the stern fact that they were slaves. Byron readily suited himself to the genius of the place. As in many other respects, so also in his adaptability to foreign manners Byron was utterly un-English. In this he was helped by his extraordinary and quite un-English talent for languages. Italian he spoke like his native tongue. His rank, his money, his fascinating person, his fame, the romance of his life, opened to him every door and enhanced the interest which he inspired especially to the fair sex. But though he frittered away much time in social pleasures, he worked hard at improving and enriching his poetry. However the curse of his expatriation weighed on him; like so many exiles he took a crooked and distorted view of things at home and of the world in general. The caustic, bitter tone of his mind exhibits itself everywhere and changes the morbidity of his *Childe Harold* into the irony and acid satire of his *Don Juan*.

The great epic of the second part of Byron's career as a poet is to a certain extent an autobiography like *Childe Harold*, but the romantic dreamer has become a profane sceptic and scoffer. However from time to time there is a reaction and the tenderness and idealism of his nature breaks forth and vents itself in some lovely episode — as Juan's and Haidée's love-dream, or in some glorious description of scenery.

The plot which holds the two thousand two hundred Spenserian stanzas together is very loose; constantly the poet drops the thread to hunt to death some chance-thought, or image, or mere quibble that happens to start up in his path. The story itself — young Don Juan's adventures in Spain, among the Cyclades, in the harem of the Padisha, at the siege of Ismail, at the court of Catharine of Russia, and in the whirl of London society — the story itself, I say, takes up a very small space in this vast ocean of clever and witty sayings on things in general, of sarcastic invective against the established institutions of state, religion, society, against men and manners, of endless ebullitions of splenetic morgue and loose ribaldry. *Don Juan* is a worldly and a wicked book, but a mine of glittering wit and happy sayings with here and there a passage of true and deep feeling of exquisite beauty, justifying Goethe's observation that it was the most remarkable book of the century.

The dramas written in this Italian period of Byron's life show a considerable progress in the delineation of character and in the construction of the plot. Though he was somewhat hampered by the strange obstinacy with which he clung to the worn-out ideals of the pseudo-classical age and upheld the three Unities, the power and truth of the feelings represented, the deep and brilliant thoughts, the beautiful images scattered at random, strike and dazzle the reader. Yet he did not write his dramas for the stage, and though the attempt has been repeatedly made to perform them, they have never become popular.

We distinguish his historical dramas from those on *Biblical subjects*. The tragedies on *Venetian subjects*, *Marino Faliero* and *the Two Foscari* betray the author's intimate knowledge of the inner history of the great Adriatic republic, his hatred against that close oligarchy which trampled on the rights of the people and exercised a jealous control over the executive represented by the doge. The poet succeeds admirably in the representation of the milieu in which his figures move and of the passionate character of the sons of Venice. In both respects he reminds us of Otway. His *Sardanapulus*, dedicated to the 'illustrious Goethe' represents the problem of an absolute Eastern ruler whose empire was built up by his stern ancestors by conquest and bloodshed, being too humane, too kind and weak-hearted to maintain his power by the forces which reared it. There is indeed no iron in his nature. And the love for his lovely Greek slave, soft-hearted and highly cultured Myrrha, incapacitates him altogether to cope with the inner and outer foes at work to ruin him. So all he can do is to die a noble death on the burning pile of his treasures together with his beloved friend: a brilliant play which offers every opportunity to exhibit scenes of Oriental magnificence.

Far more original and of greater poetical value than these historical pieces and the poor romantic tragedy 'Werner', are the Biblical dramas 'Heaven and Earth' and 'Cain'; in which the poet shows how deeply and with what inward struggles he pondered on the great problems of life: sin and death, eternity and divine justice. Like his beautiful *Hebrew Melodies* these dramas show, how passionately Byron had studied the Bible, endeavouring to reconcile the stories of the Old Testament with the postulates of reason and justice. It is touching to see the Puritanic traditions of his childhood wrestle in his soul with the scruples of modern doubt and free thought.

The short drama *Heaven and Earth* is based on an old Hebrew legend according to which at the time before the flood angels used to walk the earth and to love the fairest daughters of Cain. In vain two of the sons of Noah dispute to their angelic rivals two of these maidens, yearning to save them from the impending flood. Noah calls them back, whilst Raphael descends to summon those angels home. They refuse to give up their human brides and wing their flight with them to some other world, whilst the earth is overwhelmed with destruction and the great death-struggle of all living creatures begins. But Noah's ark floats by peacefully carrying in its bosom the hope of a future humanity.

The *Mystery Cain* is the most powerful self-confession of the poet; in it Byron discloses his innermost heart with least reserve and in words of fire. Like a caged lion his scepticism shakes at the prison-bars of belief.

Whilst Abel, not questioning the justice of the Divine order that drove them out of Paradise, quietly submits to his fate and slaughters his guiltless sheep on the altar of Jehovah being approved by the Lord, Cain doubts the justice of man's condemnation, is haunted by the awful spectre of that unknown terror Death which is to come into the world, and is confirmed in his doubts by Lucifer who rouses his resentment that one day his dearest feeling, his great passion for his sister-wife Adah will be considered criminal, nay sacrilegious. When the quarrel breaks out between the brothers, and Cain unadvertently slays Abel, his horror at his deed is thus described:

His eyes are open! Then he is not dead!
 Death is like sleep; and sleep shuts down our lids.
 His lips, too, are apart; why, then, he breathes!
 And yet I feel it not. His heart! — his heart!
 Let me see, doth it beat? methinks — No! — no!
 This is a vision, else I am become
 The native of another and worse world.
 The earth swims round me! —

The poem ends sadly but with some comfort, „in Wehmut“ like *Paradise Lost*. Adah, faithful to the last, clings to her husband and shares his banishment. What a delicate feeling the poet had for a wife's soothing love, and how he missed it in his last hour!

In *Cain* the poet reached the height of his power. *Goethe* describes the impression which he received in reading it in the words:

„Byron's *Cain* ist von so einziger Schönheit, daß es in der Welt nicht zum zweiten Mal vorhanden ist.“

But unfortunately the poet had at a time of life when others start, already attained the zenith of his career; and the setting of this sun was to be even more rapid than the rising.

Last Years and Death.

In Venice Byron had fallen in love with the charming Countess Guiccioli. She obtained a divorce from her husband and lived in closest intimacy with the English poet. Thus Byron was initiated in the conspiracy which spread over all Italy to free the country from the Austrian yoke. Byron helped the good cause with his money and influence as a British peer. He had followed the relations of his paramour, the Gambas, from place to place, at last to Genoa. But he felt that Italy was getting too hot for him, besides he longed for a change, a new scene of action, some new work. For ten years he had held Europe spell-bound. He began to feel that his genius was exhausted; and he had weakened his constitution by semi-starvation, lest he should grow obese. Should he outlive the admiration of Europe? No, he must achieve something quite unexpected, to fix once more all eyes upon him.

In 1821 the Greek rebellion against Turkey broke out in Moldavia, then in Greece itself. The enthusiasm of Liberal Europe, suppressed by the Holy Alliance, broke out in the great Philhellenic movement. Byron resolved to place his fortune, his talents, his very life at the disposal of Greece. He landed at *Missolonghi* (5th of January 1824), organised a small army, and was planning an attack on the castle of Lepanto. But

the fatigue he underwent, many disappointments, and the malarious air of the place brought about a fever.

The ignorance of the physicians, the confusion which prevailed among his followers, the absence of a tender woman's hand, caused his death on Easter Day, the 18th of April 1824. 37 shots were fired at his death, the number of years he had attained. The news was heard with a burst of sorrow by all Europe, except by the English Tories then in power.

Wilhelm Müller gave utterance to the universal grief by the dirge beginning:

Siebenunddreissig Trauerschüsse? und wen haben sie gemeint?

And Goethe sacrificed the whole plan of his Tragedy of Helen, the noble episode in the second part of Faust, and represented his *Euphorion*, the son of Faust and Helena, as *Lord Byron* falling for the greatness of Hellas.

Byron is one of the most striking examples of the *change of fame* owing to the change of social and literary standards. Living at a time of world-shaking revolutions, he reflected emotions, passions, deeds far beyond the range of ordinary experience; and a public accustomed to watch the struggle of giants was able to follow the poet in his flight. Moreover the personal interest evoked by the poet and his extraordinary career, was overpowering. Was there a reader who could have witnessed all this and judge his poetry only on its own merits? a poetry essentially egotistic, which was in fact nothing but the revelation of the inner life of the man?

Now we judge his poetry simply as a work of art, — the tragic pose of the author has lost its hold on our imagination. The standard has changed; the tricks of the Romantic school no longer impose on us; we look for truth. Moreover Modern Europe has become very practical; his idiosyncrasy, — his weariness of life, his „Weltschmerz“, is a thing of the past. We now perceive that Byron has failed to build up a single perfect work of art; that in fact we can fully admire only fragments of his works: his powerful descriptions of nature and of works of art, the fiery and irresistible eloquence of his passion, his poignant wit and satire, and above all his incomparable style. But on the other hand, if the historian wishes to do justice to Byron, he will have to recognise him as the greatest representative of that generation which saw the great work of the French revolution undone and sorrowed over the shattered wreck of their ideals. So, though England renounced him, Germany, France, Italy, above all Hungary and the Slavonic races consider Byron the greatest English

poet after Shakespeare. As a man, as an artist, as a thinker Byron is, for the present, out of harmony with his countrymen. "Nevertheless nothing can be more certain than his commanding place in English literature. He is the only British poet of the nineteenth century who is also European; nor will time fail to make his greatness clearer to his countrymen when a just critical judgment finally dominates the fluctuation of fashion to which he has been subject."

Thomas Moore, 1779 to 1852,

the greatest English *lyric poet* after Burns was like Burns not an Englishman. He was born in Dublin, of Roman Catholic parents, a typical Irishman, amiable, amusing, good-natured, full of fancy, wit and drollery, genial and sparkling, but vain, somewhat childish and sometimes ridiculous. His letter of nobility as a man and a poet is his patriotism, his passionate love for his emerald isle; *Erin* is the mistress of his life. But with his tiny figure, his pretty cherub face, his soft heart, his fondness of flattery and good-living he had not the stuff of the hero in him. So when his people rose in rebellion in 1798 against English oppression, he was satisfied with singing the glories and the sorrows of his race, whilst his friend *Emmet* fought for his country, was taken prisoner, tried by court-martial, and publicly executed. Moore went to London, was welcomed in the aristocratic saloons of the Opposition Party, sang with his beautiful voice his own patriotic songs with his guitar slung round his shoulder, and fully enjoyed the incense of flattery of his English hosts. But though one might smile at the little man, one could not help loving him, for he was truly kind and generous, and his heart and hand were always open to his poor countrymen, nay to every one who appealed to him for assistance.

His first attempt at literature was a translation of *Anacreon* whose light, airy style and glowing sensuality were congenial to the young Irishman. In 1801 he published a volume of original verse under the name of *Thomas Little*, for which he was rewarded by an official position in the Bermuda Isles; and in this terrestrial paradise he actually resided for a year. At that time he published a volume of *Odes and Epistles*. On his return he entered upon the noble task of writing lyrics as texts to ancient music of his native country. His *Irish Melodies* displayed great fervour and pathos with exquisite melody and purity of diction. An accomplished musician himself, he endeavoured to express in words the feelings

to which music gives utterance. The old airs were consecrated to the recollections of the ancient glories, the valour, the beauty, and the sufferings of Ireland. Of these Irish Melodies ten parts were published, the best of which are undoubtedly those in which he transmutes into verse the woes and aspirations of his unfortunate countrymen. I quote as an example the poem in which the poet makes his friend Emmet address the bride he left behind, Sarah Curran, an English girl, by a tragic coincidence the daughter of the judge who pronounced his death-sentence; and the poem in which the fate of Sarah Curran is described when after the death of her lover she pined away in Sicily. The latter I will give in full:

She is far from the land where her young hero sleeps,
And lovers are round her sighing;
But coldly she turns from their gaze, and weeps,
For her heart in his grave is lying.

She sings the wild songs of her dear native plains,
Every note which he loved awaking; —
Ah! little they think, who delight in her strains,
How the heart of the Minstrel is breaking.

He had lived for his love, for his country he died,
They were all that to life had entwined him;
Nor soon shall the tears of his country be dried,
Nor long will his love stay behind him.

Oh! make her a grave where the sunbeams rest
When they promise a glorious morrow;
They'll shine o'er her sleep, like a smile from the West,
From her own loved island of sorrow.

Next to his patriotic songs stand those in which a moral reflection is conveyed in that metaphorical form which only Moore has been able to realise in lyrics for music; so in the touching songs: 'I saw from the Beach' and 'tis the last Rose of Summer'.

These poems are the most finished gems of the English lyric muse. It is true they lack the manly force, the bracing energy, and wild naturalness of the poetry of Burns. But Burns with all his tenderness is the true representative of the strong Germanic north, whilst Moore has the softness and yielding impressiveness of the Celtic race.

The embezzlement of Moore's deputy in the Bermuda Isles suddenly burdened Moore with a heavy debt (6000 £!) and forced him to leave his country to avoid being arrested. It was during this prolonged conti-

mental tour that he visited Lord Byron at Venice, with whom he was on terms of great intimacy. Whilst at Paris he developed his great gifts as a satirist, writing most amusing pamphlets on English politics and English society, such as *the Twopenny — Post-bag*, containing letters of famous Englishmen supposed to have been found in the Post Bag sent to Paris, — the *Fudge Family* in Paris ridiculing the average English travellers by whom France was overrun after the great peace of 1815; and his *Fables for the Holy Alliance* in mockery of that misnamed conspiracy of sovereigns to suppress all freedom in Europe. But his greatest work had already appeared in 1817 when it at once became one of the standard works of English literature:

Lalla Rookh.

The East had at last been thrown open to the philosopher, the philologist, and the poet. Goethe and Rückert drank deep from the magic cup of Oriental poetry. But no poet succeeded better than Moore in catching the spirit of the hothouse atmosphere of India. Here indeed the winds are laden with perfume, roses glow, birds warble sweetly, fountains tinkle, jewels flash, and soft eyes glance irresistible darts. For the more masculine taste of the North there is perhaps too much sweetness in this. Perhaps there is also too much learning, for the poet, who never visited the countries he described, had stocked his memory from books with a vast number of facts and dates.

Lalla Rookh is an epic poem which contains *four stories* set in a skilfully contrived frame. Lalla Rookh, daughter of great Aurungzebe, has been betrothed to the son of the King of Bucharia whom she has never seen, and she sets out from the Great Mogul's residence at Delhi in all the magnificence of Oriental royalty to travel through lovely Cashmere and over the terrible mountain-passes to her new home. To entertain the princess at the resting-places of the caravan a minstrel, Feramorz, sent by the King of Bucharia, is admitted to the princess, to divert her with his poetry. And he tells her four touching and beautiful stories which move and melt the heart of the princess. When on the frontier of Bucharia the prince is announced, she feels to her dismay that she has already lost the heart which she is expected to give him. But at the meeting she discovers to her amazement and with rapture that her destined husband is no other than the beloved minstrel.

The first of the four stories set in this romantic frame, is called the *Veiled Prophet of Khorassan*, a tale of great power and pathetic force, though the character of the hero and the story itself are somewhat revolting, and we cannot but admire the nerves of the sweet Indian princess who could bear to hear such horrors.

The second tale is the Paradise and the Peri, a jewel of modern poetry. A Peri stands disconsolate at the closed crystal-door of Paradise.

Moved by her tears the Angel who keeps the gates tells her that there is some hope left for her, for

'tis written in the Book of Fate
The Peri yet may be forgiven
Who brings to the Eternal Gate
The gift that is most dear to Heaven.

The Peri takes her flight earthward in search of such a blessed gift. Three scenes pass before our eyes. She treasures the last drop of blood a youthful Indian warrior sheds for his country, — but the gate remains closed. From plague-stricken Egypt she brings the farewell-sigh of a bride who caught death from the lips of her dying lover, — but the gate refuses to open.

At last she offers the tear of a repenting robber whose murderous arm had been stayed by the innocent prayer of a child, — and lo and behold! the crystal gates fly open and the Peri enters into Paradise.

Moore's masterpiece is *the third tale, The Fireworshippers*. Here the poet writes from his own heart and what he presents to us, is the great tragic experience of his life: the suppression of the Irish rebellion and the death of his adored Emmet. But the whole story he transfers to another time and another sphere. Iran stands for Erin. The native Persians, clinging fondly to their ancient religion of the Eternal Flame of Ormuz, stand for the Irish, nobly faithful to the Roman Catholic Church. The stern and fanatic Mahometans who invade the country and conquer it, in their right hand the bloody scimitar, in their left the Koran, stand for the English who fight with sword and Bible. Hafed, the Persian hero dies desperately fighting in the burning temple of Ormuz whilst his bride, Hinda, the lovely daughter of the grim Saracen Emir Al Hassan, is sailing away over the dark sea to mourn in some distant country.

In *the fourth tale, the Light of the Haram*, Nurmahal, the bride of Selim, son of the great Acbar, the Great Mogul, wins back her estranged lover by the bewitching charm of her voice and her lute. Here, in describing the Feast of Roses the words seem to melt on the lips of the singer and in the ears of the listener in voluptuous sweetness.

Among the *prose works* of Moore I mention his *Life of Sheridan* and his great work, — the *Life and Letters of Lord Byron*.

Percy Bysshe Shelley, 1792 to 1821.

The most consistent of the revolutionary poets of Modern England is Shelley whose life was wrecked on the bigotry of English society. Shelley was born 1792, the son and heir of a wealthy baronet. Already as a boy he attracted attention by the extraordinary beauty of his features, by his sensitive feeling of wrong and injustice, by an ideal love of truth, by his generosity, by his unwavering belief in the perfectibility of the world.

To his social idealism the world that surrounded him at school, at the university, in English society, and public life, at a time when England was ruled by an unprincipled aristocracy, must have seemed a pandemonium, and so great was the selfish indifference of the Church of England that Satan himself rather than the Divine Master of the Gospel of Love appeared to be her Lord and Governor. To this society the boy of 17 flung down his glove in a little treatise on the Necessity of Atheism. The University of Oxford expelled him. Consistent in his radicalism he married at 18 below his station, having eloped with the girl he loved to Gretna Green. The impetuous, unsuitable marriage proved unhappy. Having obtained a divorce from his wife Harriet, he attached himself to Mary Godwin, daughter of an author, and a girl of extraordinary attractions, whom he married after the death of his first wife. When Shelley claimed his children Chancellor Eldon decided that an atheist had no right to bring up his children. This decision and the general anathema which society pronounced on the free-thinker and revolutionary radical induced him to leave his country for good and to settle in Italy where he continued that intimacy with Byron which had sprung up two years before when the two Englishmen used to sail on the Lake of Geneva. On the 8th of July 1822 Shelley was drowned when trying a new sailing-boat near Leghorn. His body was washed ashore where it was solemnly cremated by Byron and Leigh Hunt.

Shelley is the poet of human liberty; everything that prevents the victory of this principle, must be conquered. He is the poet of the *Prometheus Unbound*, the noblest effort of his genius, a drama in which the human Demi-God, chained in olden times to the rock by the Tyrant of Heaven, at last bursts his chain and triumphs over Jupiter. Like Byron Shelley is an intensely subjective poet; so his strength lies in the poetry of the feelings. But he is not so feverishly excited as Byron; his poetry breathes a truly Hellenic repose; he is the classicist among the romantic poets. His poetical mood is so ethereal, so unearthly that language and thought scarcely cover each other. In his *Queen Mab* we hear glorious accords and see shining streaks of colour, but the former do not grow into melodies nor the latter into pictures; yet they move the finer heart-strings with strange power. Such poetry must of course be '*caviare to the general*'; it is far remote from all reality, there is nothing tangible about it; no story, no plot, no human interest. He wants strong pinions of the intellect who wishes to soar into the region which he inhabits, and to abide there. But even the more obtuse reader is for a time carried away

by such wonderfully rich and powerful imagination as he displays in the Sky Lark, the Cloud, the Night, the Sensitive Plant.

A strange contrast to these disembodied ethereal creations forms his tragedy of the *Cenci* where the poet has certainly produced a highly realistic and powerful embodiment of very concrete figures. Unfortunately the subject is too revolting to allow of its performance.

Probably the poet took his inspiration from Guido Reni's wonderful portrait of *Beatrice Cenci*, which hangs in the Palazzo Barberini in Rome. He enquired into the fate of the pale, sweet girl with those sad expressive eyes and heard that she was tried and executed by order of Pope Paul V on the charge of having plotted with her step-mother and brother to murder her father, their common tyrant. This father, Count Francesco Cenci, was a monster who delighted in torturing his children physically and morally, a man in whom every vice had attained prodigious growth, such a man as only the Italy of the Renaissance period could produce. In the appeals of the children for his help the Pope only sees rebellion against filial duty and divine law; so nothing is left to the children but to take justice into their own hands. Natural feeling against the laws and customs of society, is the case pleaded in the drama as in all works of Shelley, who scorns blind subjection even in the relations between parents and children. The love and veneration of children must be deserved by a father, they cannot be enforced. An unnatural parent forfeits his claim to these feelings, just as a tyrant-king forfeits the claim to the obedience of his subjects.

John Keats, 1795 to 1821,

claims our deepest sympathy as a man and our admiration as a poet. Born in London in 1795, the son of the proprietor of a livery-stable, he had not the advantage of a classical education, but like Schliemann, he taught himself and lived in the world of poetry into which he entered like a bold explorer, a knight-errant, taking the creations of classic and romantic art as realities and personal experiences. He alone succeeded in uniting in his poetry the ideals of Greece and of mediaeval chivalry, which he had studied in the works of the great Grecian authors and in those of Chaucer and Spenser. He relived their lives, but of the life of his own time he knew nothing. It seems a miracle that so young a man should be so great an artist not only in the richness, beauty, and originality of his conceptions and images, but also in the classical perfection of diction, metre, and rhythm. If fate had granted him time to develop, to know himself and the world, he would undoubtedly have become one of England's greatest poets.

In 1818 he published his *Endymion*, a Poetic Romance, which began with the often quoted words

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever", —

which revealed the rich but as yet undisciplined powers of the poet's imagination. A cruel criticism in the *Quarterly Review* deeply mortified him and accelerated the process of consumption which had already begun. He tried the milder climate of Italy, but died in Rome having borne his sufferings with admirable sweetness of temper. ("I feel the daisies growing over me"). He was buried in the Protestant cemetery near the Pyramid of Cestius.

In *Endymion* the poet retold the well-known myth of Diana's love of the charming young shepherd. *Hyperion*, his greatest but unfinished work, tells of the struggle between the Titans and the Olympian gods. The romantic element prevails in *the Eve of St. Agnes*, a beautiful love-story in which Madeline is borne away by her lover Porphyro at midnight out of the castle of her father; in *Isabella or the Pot of Basil*, an imitation of Boccaccio's story of the unhappy love of Lorenzo and Isabella, and in the splendid ballad *La Belle Dame sans Merci*. Five grand odes (On a Grecian Urn, To Psyche, To Autumn, On Melancholy, To a Nightingale) reveal his talent as a lyric and reflective poet. As an example of his style I give his

Sonnet on first looking into Chapman's Homer.

Much have I travelled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.

Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific — and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

In his devotion to beauty as the great blessing and consolation of life and as the outer form and revelation of truth Keats exercised a great influence on the poets of the Victorian Aera.

Leigh Hunt, 1784 to 1859,

a friend of Byron and Shelley, commenced his literary career as a journalist, but was deprived of his freedom for two years on account of a scurrilous attack on the Prince Regent; this time he described in his charming book: *Autobiography and Reminiscences*, which proves that his „Festungstid“ was considerably more pleasant than that of his German contemporary, Fritz Reuter. Hunt's most important literary effort is his *Story of Rimini* 1816, which takes for his subject the magnificent episode told by Dante in his *Inferno* called Francesco da Rimini.

Walter Savage Landor, 1775—1864,

lived through nearly a century and became a contemporary of two distinct periods of poetry, that of Cowper, Burns, Byron, and Sheridan and that of Tennyson, Dickens, Swinburne, his admirer and imitator. Like many other independent spirits, he preferred to live abroad and eventually died in Florence, having sympathised with, or actually shared in, every struggle for freedom that went on in the world from the rising of Spain against Napoleon to the insurrection headed by Garibaldi.

Landor is on the whole better as a writer of prose than of verse. His *Imaginary Conversations* ranging over all history and almost every subject, are written in pure nervous English and are full of thought and interest. But also in some of his poems we find real passion with simplicity and naturalness of expression, as in the *Maid's Lament* and in the beautiful little poem *Rose Aylmer*.

Ah, what avails the sceptred race!
 Ah, what the form divine!
 What every virtue, every grace!
 Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
 May weep, but never see,
 A night of memories and sighs
 I consecrate to thee.

Felicia Hemans, 1793—1855,

was a great favourite with the public during the first half of the century, especially with the young, as an amiable and melodious singer of sweet and natural feeling. Her shorter poems still find a place of honour in selections of poetry for schools, are recited with delight, and rouse gentle piety,

love of nature and of home. Such are *The Better Land*, *The Child's First Grief*, *The Voice of Spring*, the *Homes of England*, and *Casabianca*; but there is a marked decline of popular estimation with regard to her work. A more ambitious production is her epic idyll in the *Spenserian Stanza* „The Forest Sanctuary“ which was translated into German by Freiligrath under the name of *Das Waldheiligtum*. Moreover she tried to do what Herder had done for Germany in his *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* by publishing a collection of highly successful translations of songs and ballads of foreign literatures, called: *Lays of Many Lands*.

Age of Queen Victoria.

1. VICTORIAN ROMANTICISM.

Tennyson, 1809 to 1892.

Tennyson stands before us as the representative of a great age, perhaps the most important period of English history: *the Age of Victoria*. He felt, he weighed, he gave utterance to all the mighty and best interests, thoughts, problems, emotions, passions, convictions of his time, — the Providence-appointed Poet Laureate of the English people. But he stands also before us as the type of all that is best and noblest in the English character, the true gentleman.

The England of Tennyson has passed through wonderful changes. When he was 16 years old the first railway was opened; when he died a net-work of many thousand miles of railway spread over the United Kingdom, many thousand steamboats crossed the ocean carrying their living cargoes of bold and energetic Englishmen and their heavy freights of English manufactures to the most distant regions of the earth. The colonies had grown into great nations — Canada, Australia, New-Zealand, South Africa — rivalling in prosperity with the mother-country; and that great Dependency of India had become a rich and flourishing Empire with a magnificent system of ports, canals, railways, schools and universities.

When Tennyson was young, England was governed by a sort of Venetian oligarchy, a proud landed aristocracy which disposed of the seats of the House of Commons at their pleasure and enriched themselves by prohibitive laws. Tennyson eagerly watched the great process of 'Freedom broadening slowly down From precedent to precedent'!

He saw the abolition of slavery in the colonies, the emancipation of the Roman Catholics, the Jews, the Dissenters; he lived to see justice done to Ireland. He rejoiced at the abolition of the cornlaws and the introduction of free-trade. He witnessed the successive reforms of Parliament through the

gradual extension of the franchise and the introduction of secret voting by ballot; the abolition of the purchase system in the army, the introduction of competitive examinations to do away with the system of patronage and corruption that had disgraced the administration. He saw the great reform of the entire scholastic system of England by the introduction of compulsory education, whilst, at the same time, he saw his country pass safely through such tremendous crises as the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny. He listened to the great debates of Liberals and Conservatives, Churchmen, Sectarians, Free-thinkers, of Protectionists and Freetraders, of Men of Science and Theologians, of Socialists and Anarchists, while he saw abroad empires rise and fall amid tremendous national and international convulsions. The storm-tossed ocean of the social, political, and religious life of the grand nineteenth century the poet and thinker watched from his retreat in the sweet scenery of rural England and with his imagination, his fears and hopes, his thoughts and dreams he lived the life of his time and reflected it in his poetry.

But this is only half of his work. His poetry is also the revelation of his own being, his most personal life, his own noble self. His lofty patriotism repudiates a mean shop-keeper policy; the honour of England, her imperial position as a world-power with her providential task to spread the spirit of freedom, of manly independence and self-reliance, are ever present to his mind. He passionately sympathises with all the victims of political, social, religious tyranny. He has the chivalrous feeling of his race towards women, high and low. He hates all sham and cant as he is himself truthful and generous. He shrinks from the great world with its noise, its affectation, its false glitter, social ambition and rivalries. So he led a secluded, almost solitary life, a life without incident, entirely devoted to self-culture and poetry. The English love of nature he possesses to such a degree that what was said of Goethe applies to Tennyson too: Nature wanted to see what she was like, therefore she created Tennyson.

Tennyson as a Lyric Poet.

Alfred Tennyson sprang from an old Norman family. He was born on the 6th of August 1809 at *Somersby* in Lincolnshire, the son of a tall, athletic, and at the same time highly accomplished country-clergyman. Alfred was one of 12 children, of whom Charles was nearest to his heart. With him he roamed through the charming neighbourhood in sight of the German Ocean. With him he enjoyed his favourite authors, first Thomson, then Scott, last of all Byron. With him he published the first fruits of his talent in 1827: *Poems by Two Brothers, written individually*. With Charles he entered Trinity College, Cambridge (1828), where they were joined by their brother Frederick, likewise a poet. At Cambridge a

circle of highly-gifted college friends rallied around the three Tennysons, but the Leading Spirit of the band was a youth of extraordinary power and promise, *Henry Hallam*, the son of the great historian. In remembrance of these delightful days of fellowship and highest aspirations Tennyson wrote at a later time the lines describing these youthful debates in the beloved college:

‘Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
And labour, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land;
When one would aim an arrow fair,
But send it slackly from the string;
And one would pierce an outer ring,
And one an inner, here and there;
And last the master-bowman, he,
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear
We lent him. Who, but hung to hear
The rapt oration flowing free
From point to point, with power and grace
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw
The God within him light his face.’

At Cambridge Tennyson won his first success: the Chancellor's gold medal for a prize poem on *Timbuctoo* in blank verse.

In 1830 he published his first independent collection of *Poems, chiefly lyrical*. Among these are *Lilian*, *Isabel*, *Mariana*, the *Merman*, the *Mermaid*, the *Ballad of Oriana*, the *Dying Swan* in which Tennyson appears already as the poet of sensation who sees all the forms of nature with a penetrating glance and whose ear has a fairy-fineness. His style exhibits a variety of measures and an exquisite modulation of harmonious words and cadences.

In those happy days of youth Tennyson made a walking-tour through the Pyrenees with his friend Hallam, the fiancé of the poet's sister. We love to portray to ourselves the poet at that time: a tall, broad-chested, athletic man, a commanding figure and a dark-bronzed face with high forehead and Grecian nose and curling dark hair, the very prototype of the Ernest Maltravers of Bulwer's famous novel.

In the winter of 1832 a second volume of poetry appeared containing such masterpieces as *the Lady of Shalott* (Tennyson's first prelude to the full quire of romantic poetry dealing with the Table Round), *the Miller's*

Daughter (the favourite poem of young Princess Victoria), *Oenone*, the *May Queen*, the *Lotos Eaters*, *Dream of Fair Women*; poems showing great progress, simpler in style, with a broader range of feeling, exquisitely natural.

A sorrow which long darkened his life made Tennyson a great poet. His friend Hallam whose spirit had been one with his, died suddenly at Vienna of heart-disease.

“God’s finger touched him and he slept.”

His body was brought home and buried near Clevedon on the river Wye in Wales. For ten years the poet was silent, collecting his strength. He generally lived with his mother and his sister in the country, studying and composing. At last in 1842 he published a new *collection of poems* in which he reached the height of his power as a lyric poet. Among these we find *Lady Clara Vere de Vere*, *the Gardener’s Daughter*, *Dora*, *Audley Court*, *Godiva*, the *Lord of Burleigh*, *Morte d’Arthur* and *Locksley Hall*. In these poems he stands revealed as the poet of the age, of its creed, its troubles, its struggles.

Locksley Hall is perhaps his most characteristic and original poem. The idea which underlies the poem is that personal misfortunes, however overwhelming, do not excuse the man of our age of abstaining from taking his full share of the great struggle for the great objects of human civilisation in the cause of that progress which may be delayed, but cannot be stopped. The hero of the poem was once slighted in love by his fair cousin Amy who sacrificed him to a wealthier but unworthy rival. On a hunting expedition he once more approaches the scene of this disappointment, *Locksley Hall*, and his grief revives. Where is consolation to be found? surely only in noble action. A picture of the future of the world rises before him with the fierce struggle of nations in furious competition of trade and commerce, in the wild noise of battle. But the terrible thunderstorm clears the air, general peace follows, and Europe is changed into a great confederation of states.

‘For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;
Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;
Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain’d a ghastly dew
From the nations’ airy navies grappling in the central blue;
Far along the world-wide whisper of the southwind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging through the thunderstorm;
Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battleflags were furl’d
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.
There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.’

This ideal may be distant, but let us try to realise it; let us struggle for progress, though our grandsons only should enjoy the fruits of our efforts. And now he has made up his mind. The past sinks into its grave. The old sorrow has disappeared, a new life begins. Fare-well for ever, Locksley Hall!

On the height reached in this poem Tennyson maintained himself for fifty years, enjoying the rarest favour allotted to genius, not to decline in a long career of great achievement.

In 1850 he published at last those poems in memory of his departed friend Henry Hallam which he had in the course of 17 years devoted to the great sorrow of his life.

In Memoriam consists of 130 poems written in iambic quatrains rhyming after the model abba. It is astonishing what a variety of ideas and images arise in the mind of the poet with regard to the one event. If we look for a sentiment, a thought which runs through all these poems it is this: through doubt to faith and submission. One of them is addressed to the Ship that bore the body of his friend to England. Another speaks of the burial of Hallam on the banks of the Wye. Another contrasts the fate of the wretch who never loved with the man who lost what he loved; and comes to the conclusion

't is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.

Another which I quoted above gives a fascinating picture of the life of the friends at the University; another records the feelings which pass through the soul of the poet, while he hears the midnight-bells ring in the New-Year, which will close his wound:

'Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.'

The same year 1850 brought in its course two important events in the life of his poet: his marriage in which he was eminently fortunate, and his appointment as *poet laureate*. This office has never been held by a greater poet and a purer character. He considered it henceforth his task to give noble utterance to the joys and the griefs of his people. He held his office with manly independence, flattering neither high nor low, but saying what he had to say without fear of man, always striking the noblest chord in the English soul. The Queen recognised him as the pride of her reign, and her husband, the Prince Consort, Albert of Saxe Coburg, shared her admiration for the poet. How he fulfilled his task may be seen from the following poems: On the Death of the Duke of

Wellington, the Charge of the Light Brigade, The Defence of Lucknow, the Dedication of the Idylls — in memory of Prince Albert, whose departed shadow he addresses:

'Thou noble Father of her (England's) kings to be,
Laborious for her people and her poor —
Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler day —
Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste
To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace —
Sweet nature gilded by the gracious gleam
Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,
Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince indeed,
Beyond all titles, and a household name,
Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good.'

In 1853 Tennyson settled with his young family at *Farringford* near Freshwater in a delightfully secluded picturesque spot close to the Needles. There he lived in retirement, but visited by many celebrated men. At that time Carlyle wrote of him to the great American essayist Emerson: Alfred is one of few British and Foreign Figures who are and remain beautiful to me — a true human soul, or some authentic approximation thereto, to whom your own soul can say: Brother!

At Farringford he wrote his most powerful lyric poem, the grand and tragic monologue of *Maud*.

The plot of the story can only be gathered from the hints suggested by the wild soliloquy of the hero whose name is not given. When he and his lovely neighbour were children, their fathers who were equally prosperous, planned a future union between them. But whilst Maud's grew immensely rich, our hero's father became a bankrupt and committed suicide, and the lover whose prospects in life were blasted, dared not raise his eyes to the lovely maid he still adored, and a deep melancholy settled upon him. However Maud loves him and the lovers are happy until the haughty brother interferes and a quarrel ensues, leading up to a duel in which Maud's brother is killed.

Then glided out of the joyous wood
The ghastly Wraith of one that I know;
And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,
A cry for a brother's blood:
It will ring in my heart and my ears,
till I die, till I die.

But though personal happiness be lost for ever, life has still its duties. At that moment the cry of war resounds, the Crimean War against the Tyrant of the North; our hero shakes off his private grief and rejoices that Britain still feels the call of honour and is not altogether lost in money-making.

Tennyson as an Epic Poet.

Tennyson was now in the zenith of his power and fame, unrivalled as a lyric poet. How could he maintain his proud station? Tennyson — like Scott — escaped the danger by changing his armour. When he appeared again in the lists it was as an epic poet. The famous idyll *Enoch Arden*, perhaps the most popular creation of the poet, forms the transition from one period to the other.

The touching story of the girl Annie Lee, loved and won by two very different rivals, the bold and strong sailor Enoch Arden, and the kind and patient miller Philip Ray; the two very different backgrounds, England with its mellow tints and sweet smells, with the homely delights of the hearth, — and the tropical island with its wild beauty of vegetation and its blazing colours; and the tragic end of Enoch who lets himself die not to destroy the peace of those he loves: all this is too well known to require a detailed account. The poem has become one of the treasures of the Literature of the World.

The great work of the second period of Tennyson's life as a poet, the great epic poem of the Victorian Era are **the Idylls of the King**, a return to romanticism, but a reconciliation of the ideals of chivalry with the ideals of the Modern Man. Once more we witness the resurrection of the great Celtic hero. King Arthur whose mighty deeds shed all the glories of an autumn sunset on the downfall of the British race, and who is not regarded as an enemy by the Saxon conquerors, is to them a truly national king and a Christian, the earliest combination of heroic valour and Christian feeling, the first type of the gentleman England produced; and so he was and is to the English the ideal of manhood, the ideal Englishman. As such he appears in the chivalric romances of the Middle Ages, in Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. To a nation of shopkeepers, to a money-getting and selfish generation, the poet wishes to hold up the image of the man who looks with lofty disdain down upon all meanness and littleness, who stakes his all to set up a standard of human perfection and ideal purity, and nobly perishes in an imperishable cause.

Tennyson's principal source was Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur*, one of the first books that issued from Caxton's Printing Office at Westminster. But here we travel through the scenes of the Arthurian legend under a grey sky in dull monotony; in Tennyson's poem the sun has burst forth and has kissed them into life and beauty.

The poet chose as title for his work the very modest and apparently inadequate name of 'Idylls of the King'; of the life and doings of Arthur — appearing, as it seemed, without a plan, taken at random out of the middle, the end, the beginning of the story. Perhaps the poet knew his public. Had he waited until he was able to publish at once his entire work as a voluminous and wisely built up

Whole, with the title: 'King Arthur, an epic poem in 12 books, — he would have frightened off the majority of readers. He preferred to lay before the public from time to time a small number of scenes, each of them a finished little picture [εἰδὼλλιον] by itself and yet in connection with the ground plan of the whole. Thus each of them had time to be fully appreciated by a public whose patience was not put to a severe test. Nay, public curiosity was roused concerning the inner connection of these stories, as gradually the astonished and delighted reader saw the great plan develop itself.

The *Idylls* appeared *between 1859 and 1885*, beginning with *Enid*, *Vivien*, *Elaine*, *Guinevere* and ending with *Balin and Balan*. But in the plan of the story they follow each other thus: *The Coming of Arthur*. *Gareth and Lynette*. *Enid*. *Balin and Balan*. *Vivien*. *Elaine*. *The Holy Grail*. *Pelleas and Ettarre*. *The Last Tournament*. *Guinevere*. *The Passing of Arthur*.

What is, *the ideal bond* which holds together all the links of the chain which the poet's fancy has forged! *Arthur* appears as the saviour of his people both from foreign enemies and from its own corruption. He raises a new standard of ideal perfection and founds *the Table Round* of those whom he succeeds to inspire with his passionate love of truth and righteousness; and indeed for a moment 'all seem to bear the likeness of the king.' But soon the shining ideal which a great man in a moment of divine inspiration created, grows dim with the rising mists of human frailty and littleness; the Paradise of Innocence and heroic virtue cannot endure on earth. Sin breaks out in the most exalted place: *Guinevere*, Arthur's Queen, is false to her husband; *Lancelot*, the flower of chivalry and the king's dearest friend, betrays his liege-lord. This drop of poison slowly, but irresistibly corrupts the whole organism. We see it spread in wider and wider circles until at last the whole noble structure of the Table Round is inwardly rotten; its soul is fled, and Arthur passes away, perhaps to return in some brighter future, in a ripper and better age. The ideal cannot be realised on earth.

It may be that the whole poem is an allegory of human life: Arthur is the soul at war with the senses and earthly passions; it comes like Arthur, we know not whence, it passes like Arthur, we know not whither; it flutters, beats, and struggles in vain. There is a talk of a happy island valley of Avilion and of a return of the king to rule once more in bliss but

'who knows?

From the great deep to the great deep he goes'.

In *the 6th idyll* — the poem attains its climax in the tragic fate of *Elaine* who, ignorant of the adulterous passion of *Guinevere*, has fixed her maiden affection on *Lancelot*. She saw him when he lost his way riding to the diamond-jousts at Camelot. The innate nobility of his soul had not been quenched by his criminal passion, and there was a charm about this hero of the battlefield and the tournament, the generous and high-minded gentleman which was irresistible. *Lancelot* pitied her and not insensible to her wondrous beauty and maiden innocence he sighed at the thought of what might have been, but he was loyal to his disloyal love:

'His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.'

Then nothing was left to Elaine but to die. But before she passed away, she dictated a letter to Sir Lancelot which she wished herself to carry to the court. So when she was dead a barge was hung with black and on it a bier was placed decked out with black velvet and on the bier the lovely maid was laid. And the faithful old servant of her house whose tongue had been cut out by the heathens, steered the barge with the rising tide up the river to Arthur's castle.

'Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead
Steer'd by the dumb went upward with the flood —
In her right hand a lily, in her left
The letter — all her bright hair streaming down —
And all her coverlid was cloth of gold
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white
All but her face, and that clear-featured face
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.'

Tennyson as a Dramatic Poet.

In 1875 Tennyson surprised the world with his first drama *Queen Mary*. In the meantime he had left the Cockneyfied Isle of Wight and had settled down in the rural solitude of Aldworth in Sussex where he spent the remainder of his life in quiet seclusion with his wife and grown-up children. In 1876 followed his *Harold*, in 1878 his *Becket*. These are great historical plays. In 1878 followed a small idyllic play, *the Falcon*, on a subject taken from Boccaccio's Decamerone. In 1881 appeared *the Cup*, a romantic play of great force and passion taking its subject from Roman history, which was performed at the Lyceum Theatre by Irving and Ellen Terry. At last in 1882 followed a play which took its subject from modern English peasant life: *The Promise of May*.

It was a bold attempt to begin to write for the stage at the age of 64, after a life spent outside the rush and roar of the tide of human existence; moreover without any practical knowledge of the requirements of the theatre. Besides, Tennyson was a strongly marked individuality, grand and lofty in thought, tender and delicate in feeling, but somewhat rugged, stiff, and unbending. The consequence is that his delineation of character is strained, we perceive the intention of the labouring poet. In his historical plays he is hampered by his learning. His knowledge of the period represented is so comprehensive that he crowds the scene with characters and with detail, so that the great outlines of the plot do not stand out with sufficient clearness and the unity of interest is impaired.

Return to Lyric Poetry.

It is wonderful how Tennyson preserved his poetic faculty to the very limit of life. In 1885 and 1886 he published new books of songs — *Tiresias* and other Poems, *Locksley Hall*, *Sixty Years after*. The latter is as fresh and powerful and noble a conception as the famous poem of his youth.

In this striking poem the man of 77 passes in review the phenomena of the age in which he lives with all its troubles, sins, and follies, and speaks his mind with a passionate earnestness which sometimes rises to a prophetic strain as in the grand passage where he attacks the newest evolution of Art of which the pessimism of Ibsen, the naturalism of Zola, and the ultra-realistic painters of our exhibitions are the representatives.

Thus the grand old man held high the standard of idealism to the end, preaching faith and love, patriotism, and true humanity.

His people listened to his voice with reverence, the Queen made him a peer, and he honoured the House of Lords by taking his seat in it as Lord Tennyson, Baron of Aldworth and Farrington, and when "his great and heroic soul passed away" on the 6th of October 1892, his body was carried by England's greatest men to its resting-place among the mighty dead in Westminster Abbey.

The only serious rival Tennyson ever had was

Robert Browning, 1812—1889,

but his style is so marred by obscurity of thought and diction that he can never be popular. Browning is more a philosophic dreamer than a poet. His dramatic monologues, his tales want action, clearness, an interesting plot. Browning spent a great part of his life in Italy at the time of its great struggle for freedom and unity, in which he was deeply interested; at Florence he married the poetess Elizabeth Barrett. After her death he settled in England for a time, but returned to Italy and died at Venice. His principal works are: *Paracelsus*, an imitation of Faust; *Strafford*, a tragedy; *Sordello*, a drama; *Pippa Passes*, a drama; *A Soul's Tragedy*; *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*; *Men and Women*; *The Ring and the Book*, a dramatic poem in twelve books; *Romances and Lyrics*. The philosophical puzzles which he set in his works, interested, nay fascinated many highly cultivated men and women, who founded a *Browning Society* to spread and to elucidate his works. This sect of the initiated devotees seriously pronounced him to be the greatest English poet. It is not likely that future generations will hold this opinion though he ranks high as a

lyric poet. His short poems and songs such as "The Last Ride Together" and "The Year's at the Spring" are of great charm and sweetness, going straight to the heart.

Browning is an optimist; his message is: Life is good because it is full of problems and difficulties, for in them a man proves his soul. He is at the same time a realist; his aim is to represent human life and character as it is. "The play of light and shadow in the world, of good and evil in complex characters has an endless attraction for him." He seems to delineate his ideal of manhood in the following lines:

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamt though right were worsted, wrong could triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

It is a strange fact, that — as Cowper wrote John Gilpin — this most difficult master of English verse produced an excellent ballad for the young: *The Pied Piper of Hameln*, greatly superior in graphic force and humour to the German poet Julius Wolf's famous Rattenfänger von Hameln.

Mrs. Browning or with her maiden name *Elizabeth Barrett* was probably the greatest poetess of England. Leading for years the life of a recluse and an invalid she gathered immense stores of knowledge reading almost every important book in every possible language. But she wanted the experience and knowledge of life with its passions and emotions so necessary for the development of poetical genius. Besides, her vast erudition and her ambition to use difficult metres often hampered her. *Mrs. Browning* is one of the greatest sonnet-writers in the English language and for that reason has been ranked with Wordsworth. Let me quote as an example the following:

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and Ideal Grace.

I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun to candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise;

I love thee with the passion put to use
 In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith;
 I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
 With my lost saints—I love thee with the breath,
 Smiles, tears of all my life! and, if God choose,
 I shall but love thee better after death.

In 1856 appeared the longest and most ambitious of her poems, *Aurora Leigh*, written in blank verse.

It traces the intellectual development of two noble human souls, those of the poetess Aurora Leigh and of the social reformer Romney Leigh, her cousin, who find at last at the end of the book the best solution of all the problems of life in love. Aurora Leigh is a splendid type of a high-minded English woman. In her, true English commonsense is properly balanced with fervent idealism. While living on the heights of intellectual life she can cast an eye of pity on the abject misery of the lowest classes of society. I quote from this work the following passage devoted to the profession of the poet:

— Ay, and while your common men
 Lay telegraphs, gauge railroads, reign, reap, dine,
 And dust the flaunty carpets of the world
 For kings to walk on, or a president,
 The poet suddenly will catch them up
 With his voice like a thunder: 'This is soul,
 This is life, this word is being said in heaven,
 Here's God down on us! what are you about?
 How all those workers start amid their work,
 Look round, look up, and feel, a moment's space,
 That carpet-dusting, though a pretty trade,
 Is not the imperative labour after all.

O delight

And triumph of the poet, who would say
 A man's mere 'yes', a woman's common 'no',
 A little human hope of that or this,
 And says the word so that it burns you through
 With a special revelation, shakes the heart
 Of all the men and women in the world,
 As if one came back from the dead and spoke,
 With eyes too happy, a familiar thing
 Become divine in the utterance! while for him
 The poet, speaker, he expands with joy;
 The palpitating angel in his flesh
 Thrills inly with consenting fellowship
 To those innumerable spirits who sun themselves
 Outside of time.

Miss Barrett had in 1846 become the wife of Robert Browning and had settled with him in Florence; here she witnessed the revolutionary outbreak of 1848 and these observations furnished her the material for her *Casa Guidi Windows*, containing the impressions which she received looking out into the streets from her Tuscan home. Part of it might have been written by Byron himself, so warm is her affection for Italy and the Italians. Her *Sonnets from the Portuguese* pretend to be translations, but are as original creations — and of greatest power — as the songs of Mirza Schaffy by Bodenstedt. Mrs. Browning died in Florence in 1861, so she lived to see the birth of a New Italy.

The New Romantic Movement.

Owing to the application of steam-power in producing the articles of manufacture with which English commerce flooded the whole earth, owing to the opening of innumerable coal and iron mines and the construction of many thousand miles of railway and countless steam-boats, England had grown rich and hideous. Money had become the motive power of action. A black cloud of smoke had settled over those hives of men pent up in huge factories — the East End of London, Manchester, Black-Country, Bradford, Leeds, Sheffield, Glasgow a. s. o. The workman was degraded to a mechanical lever in a machine, — without thought, feeling, interest; the enriched iron-master, merchant, banker was an uneducated snob. English life had lost its sweetness, and English art had sunk to cold conventionalism.

When things had come to this pass, a small band of enthusiasts, poet-painters or painter-poets joined in fellowship to raise the standard of beauty, by returning to the intensity of inner life, the naturalness, the faith, and naïveté of the painters and poets previous to the Renaissance; — Raphael appeared to them cold and conventional. They preferred the shy, modest, and mysterious bud to the full-blown flower and found the ideal in the painters of the 15th century, Fra Angelico and Botticelli. This Art, revealing the God in us, was, to be a faith, a religion, to make life beautiful, to soften the hearts of men, to make the rich charitable, to sweeten the life of the poor, and to bring about a social reform. This movement opened up hidden springs of beauty, which have first revolutionised English taste in art, in the decoration and furniture of the house, in dress, in manners, — then spread to the continent and exercised a most beneficial influence also in Germany.

The founder of the *Pre-Raphaelite-Brotherhood* was

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, (1828—1882),

the son of an Italian poet and scholar exiled from his country as a member of the Carbonari society. Young Rossetti combined Italian genius and art-instinct with English thought and idealism, and thus became one of the greatest artists of the 19th century. He took his inspiration from the intensest of all poets, Dante. His pictures, (*Dante's Dream*), his poems, show a depth and intensity of feeling unrivalled in art. In the *sonnet* he found an instrument of expression which he handled with the taste and elegance of Petrarch and the mystic passion of Dante. The subject of these sonnets — perhaps the finest in the English language — is love; and in truth of feeling he is superior to the poet of Laura. Of his ballads which were inspired by Percy's *Relics*, his best are *The King's Tragedy*, describing the self-sacrifice of Catherine Douglas who thrust her arm into the iron rings of the door from which the bolts had been treacherously unfastened, thus barring the way for a few moments against the murderers of James I., *The White Ship*, which tells us of the wreck of the ship which was to take young *Prince Henry* back to England in 1120; and *the Blessed Damsel*, remarkable for the extreme beauty of its imagery and the perfect music of its language.

As an example of Rossetti's style I quote part of his sonnet 'Lost Days'.

The lost days of my life until to-day,
 What were they, could I see them on the street
 Lie as they fell? Would they be ears of wheat
 Sown once for food, but trodden into clay?
 Or golden coins squandered and still to pay?
 Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet?
 Or such spilt water as in dreams must cheat
 The undying throats of Hell, athirst alway?

The second poet-artist of the Pre-Raphaelites is **William Morris**, 1834—1896, whose influence on English art and manners has been most comprehensive, as he was not only a highly-gifted poet and painter, but tried "to make English homes more like the beautiful Past" by giving a new and most beneficial impulse to create artistic taste in book-printing and binding, in the designing of stained glass, of wall-paper, of household furniture; while at the same time he threw himself passionately into the socialistic movement to force the government at last to do justice to the rightful demands of the working classes. Morris is the most extraordinary combination of opposites: a classicist, a romanticist, alike at home in the

world of the Renaissance and in the world of the Scandinavian sagas; a poet, a painter, an engineer, a printer, a book-binder, a weaver and embroiderer, a cabinet-maker; — indeed a Renaissance genius like Lionardo.

His poetry seems sufficient to fill a life. In 1858 he published *The Defence of Guinevere*, thus forestalling the first publication of Tennyson's Idylls. Then he turned to a classical subject. In 1867 appeared *The Life and Death of Jason*. Then he combined classical and romantic tales in *The Earthly Paradise* (1868—71), a poem of 40 thousand lines, containing 24 tales; 12 classical, 12 mediaeval stories, told in the style of Chaucer. Then followed the Old Germanic or Scandinavian period with *Sigurd the Volsung* in 1876, — all these besides a translation of the *Odyssey*, of the *Aeneid*, of *Beowulf* and a long series of highly imaginative prose-stories in a peculiar archaic English chiefly containing pictures of old Germanic life, reminding the German reader of Freytag's *Ahnen*. His last writings refer to the great socialistic movement which he had embraced with the whole force of his energetic nature. If we lack one quality in Morris which seems necessary to make a great poet, it is humour, of which his great model, Chaucer, had a goodly store. But this applies to all the *Pre-Raphaelites*.

Algernon Charles Swinburne, 1837—1909.

Swinburne, the most original of the poets of England then living, might well have succeeded to the laureateship left vacant by the death of Tennyson. But as he had given much offence to the sense of propriety of the educated classes by his revolutionary ideas and glowing sensuality, and as he could never be popular among the masses because of his affection for strange, outlandish, and archaic forms of poetry and diction, the government handed the laurel-wreath to a respectable minor poet, W. Austin, who thinking of his predecessor, must feel like the student in Goethe's *Faust* in whose album Mephistopheles had written: *Eritis sicut Deus*, „Dir wird gewiß einmal bei deiner Gottähnlichkeit bange.“

Swinburne was in the happy position of being absolutely independent of public opinion. Being a rich man he could afford to be a literary epicure and to write poetry only to please himself, indifferent to the impression made on others. He is regarded as the chief of the „fleshly school“, because in his representation of love he indulges in the glowing colours and voluptuous passions utterly foreign to the poets of the age of Wordsworth. But he is the greatest English artist in handling the material

element of form. The elegance and smoothness, the variety of rhyme and rhythm, the melodious ring of his poetry are dazzling, but the utter refinement and apparent intention weary the reader. In his *Poems and Ballads* (1866), his *Songs before Sunrise*, his *Songs of the Springtides*“ Swinburne plays with the most difficult metres and rhythms “like a juggler with many-coloured glassballs.” Besides a number of newly invented and very effective strophes, he lavishes on the hearer a fullness of sound, in alliteration, assonance, and music of words, as no poet before him. In energy and depth of passion he ranks above Tennyson, but he lacks his self-restriction, purity of taste, and chasteness of feeling. We see in him the representation in poetry of the „unendliche Melodie“. Extreme length spoils his most powerful poems, as for instance his *Dolores* and *Laus Veneris*. The former is an intoxicating glorification of the mad, painfraught delights of love. Sometimes in these magnificent ravings the poet himself seems to have gone as mad as the bacchanals who follow the car of Bacchus or as Nero whom he describes looking down on burning Rome.

Very strange in so original a poet is Swinburne's mania for imitation of foreign models. In fact he too often exchanges his own powerful originality for a toying and trifling with Greek, Roman, Mediaeval-French, Old English and other models. Thus he wastes his strength on learned and pedantic eccentricities. More than any other English poet he underwent the influence of French models, such as Théophile Gautier, Charles Baudelaire, and Victor Hugo; nay he himself wrote French poetry.

In England his dramas are prized beyond his lyrics, but as works of art they are decidedly inferior to his poems and ballads. Though written in beautiful language, they lack that concentration of interest which would make them good reading dramas, their performance is quite out of the question. In 1865 appeared his classical tragedy *Atalanta in Calydon*, in which he succeeds in attaining the grandeur and austerity of Aeschylus especially in the magnificent hymns of the Chorus, when he addresses Diana in the followig words:

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
 Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
 With a noise of winds and many rivers,
 With a clamour of waters, and with might;
 Bind on thy sandals, o thou most fleet,
 Over the splendour and speed of thy feet;
 For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers
 Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Swinburne wrote a great historical trilogy *Mary Stuart*, consisting of the three parts: Chastelard, Bothwell, and Mary Stuart, rich in fine passages but wearying the reader by their length. At last fired by the example of Tennyson, but above all inspired by Wagner he ventured to encroach on Tennyson's own domain in an epic poem on *Tristram in Lyonesse* a subject which allowed him to put forth his full power of sensuous passion. This knight of the flesh is indeed the very ideal of Swinburne's Muse.

John Ruskin, 1819—1900.

The great art critic who came to the assistance of the Pre-Raphaelites in their struggle against Philistine utilitarianism and cold soulless conventionality, set up a new ideal of life, and exercised an incalculable influence on his generation and beyond it, was John Ruskin, one of the noblest minds Modern England has produced. Art is to be in his opinion the great lever which is to heave modern society out of the slough of despond and degradation into which it has sunk in consequence of the worship of the material forces of the earth. Not the production of wealth but the creation of happiness should be the aim and end of our existence. Human life must be sweetened by the humanising force of beauty in art and in nature. There is an intimate connection between art and morality. But there can be no morality where there is misery and ignorance. So a social reform must go hand in hand with the spreading of the elevating influences of art. Ruskin stands before the nation as an inspired prophet, preaching the gospel of a life enriched by moral and aesthetical forces, denying the redeeming power of the worn-out tenets of political economy. With irresistible eloquence — of whose effects the writer of these lines was, during his stay at Oxford, a delighted witness, — with passionate enthusiasm he pleads this great cause in his lectures and in his writings, and for a time his hearers and his listeners

“all bore the likeness of the King”.

John Ruskin was a rich man who could afford to, and did sacrifice his, life and his wealth to his mission. In 1843 he began to publish his *Modern Painters*, which raised a storm of applause. In the first book he taught a due appreciation of the great landscape-painter Turner whose scenes from a poetic dream-land had puzzled and bewildered the public. In the following books, II—IV, he described the works of the great religious

painters of Florence and Venice, thus paving the way for an understanding of the pictures of the Pre-Raphaelites, Rossetti, Millais, Holman Hunt, Burne Jones a. o.

Then followed his *Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *the Stones of Venice* where he showed how the beauties of Italian art sprang out of the system of mediaeval society itself; arguing that to raise the standard of art in England it would be necessary to make the people itself live a better and more natural life. This idea is more fully developed in the following books, in which he stands forth as a social reformer: "Unto this Last". Then he tried various schemes of practical reform on which he spent much money — to give more comfortable and cleaner houses to the poor, to found labour-colonies, to promote home industries etc.

In his *Sesame and Lilies* he speaks of books and of the art of reading them. In *Time and Tide* and in *Fors Clavigera* he addresses letters to the workmen of England. His *Praeterita* is the story of his own life. Ruskin is the most exquisite prose-writer the 19th century has produced; no other author could describe works of art or natural scenery like Ruskin.

The Novel in the Age of Queen Victoria.

The novel has become the epic poem of modern life reflecting it in its endless variety of aspects. In the great struggle for progress which began in England with the Reform Bill, breaking down and changing the distinctions of class, race, and religion and to transform the most aristocratic country into a great democracy, literature played a prominent part; the power of the press asserted itself in England more than in any other country. The Press is the mouth-piece of Public Opinion, and in a democracy Public Opinion is the arbiter in all the problems of public life.

Public Opinion, however, vents itself in modern England 1. in the countless daily papers which are most ably conducted; 2. in the many periodicals, some of which may be called truly classical; and 3, in the novel, the mirror of society in a much wider sense than the stage. The amount of fiction produced in England is incalculable; the supply seems to outbid the demand. But if we consider, how many millions of English-speaking people on the face of the earth pass their leisure-hours at home and in travelling engrossed in a novel, we understand the quantity of the annual produce. I must be satisfied with selecting the great leaders of thought, the commanding generals in this battle of the spirits.

Edward George Bulwer, Lord Lytton, 1803—73,

attained distinction in almost every department of literature, in lyrics, the drama, the novel, the philosophic essay, the political disquisition, and last not least in translating Schiller's poems into English. At first Bulwer was under the spell of Byron in subject, style, and *pose*. The Byronic type — romantic, fascinating, with a disdainful sneer and a melancholy brow — was then the vogue among young men of fashion and Bulwer and D'Israeli were Byron's most faithful imitators. In 1828 he published *Pelham or the Adventures of a Gentleman*, a most amusing novel, fresh and youthful, gay, bright, and clever, full of brilliant and witty writing, sarcastic levity, piquant representations of the manners of the world of fashion. After this novel of fashion followed the story of *Paul Clifford*, the romantic highwayman with something of Byron's Corsair about him. Then an interesting psychological novel *Eugene Aram*, the great scholar who becomes a murderer to procure for himself the means of satisfying his craving for knowledge.

Then came his four great *historical novels*: *The Last Days of Pompeii*, *Cola di Rienzi*, *Harold*, and *the Last of the Barons*, in which he competes with Scott in conjuring up by-gone ages and succeeds in representing them with graphic power: the Roman life under the Caesars; Mediaeval Italy's first attempt at founding a united republic, the struggle between Saxons and Normans, the last struggle of feudalism against modern kingcraft.

In the meantime Bulwer had entered the House of Commons as an advanced liberal at a time when Gladstone was a staunch Tory, — gradually both changed sides, Gladstone became a liberal and even a radical, whilst Bulwer turned out a moderate conservative.

The following three novels form the transition to his *domestic novels*: *Ernest Maltravers*, its continuation *Alice*, and *Night and Morning*, all of them highly sentimental, full of pathos and with a subtle delineation of character. In all of them he passionately and eloquently pleads for social reform. No wonder that they were read with enthusiastic fervour in the Germany of 1848.

But it is the third stage of his development in which he attained the height of a master of the novel, as a painter of manners in a series of domestic novels, free from affectation, sentimentality, and mysticism, abounding in humour, quaint fancies, and exquisite delineation of character: *The Caxtons*, a Family Picture in 1849 — an imitation of Sterne's *Tristram*

Shandy, — *My Novel* or *Varieties of English Life*; *What will he do with it?*; and in 1868 *Kenelm Chillingley*, — genuine English stories containing a comprehensive representation of English life, high and low, town and country; full of masterly types of English character: country-squires, clergymen, great manufacturers and borough-radicals, artists and statesmen: novels which give us as interesting an insight into early Victorian society as the coarse novels of Fielding and Smollett represented the England of the 18th century. Need I say that we rejoice at the difference?

Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, 1804—1881,

is indeed a novelist, a writer of fiction, but the romance of his life surpasses in interest any that he ever wrote. Born as an alien and a Jew at the time where the Jews had no political rights, he rose to be the idolised chief of the proudest aristocracy on earth, the all-powerful prime-minister, who checked the ambition of Russia, set the Imperial crown of India on the head of his devoted Queen, and laid the foundation of that „Greater Britain“, which has welded the straggling members of the English world-power into one powerful whole. His father, Isaac Disraeli, may be considered as the founder of scientific literary criticism in England; his *Curiosities of Literature* and his *Amenities of English Literature* have become standard works of literary criticism. Benjamin, like Bulwer in his *Pelham*, started as a candidate for the succession of Byron's literary kingdom, in his *Vivian Grey* 1826, which contained so many allusions to public men and recent events, such sarcastic views of society and characters in high life, and was at the same time so arrogant, egotistic, and clever, that at once it attracted universal attention. He struck the same chord in „*The Voyage of Captain Poponilla*“, an adaptation of Gulliver's Travels to modern times and circumstances. After a prolonged stay in the East, he became the herald and chieftain of a party denominated „Young England“, which professed to look for the elements of national regeneration in the exertions of the heroic youth of the country. This tendency is illustrated by a number of novels, the best of which is *Contarini Fleming*, the hero of which is an idealised Disraeli revelling in scenes of future greatness, baffling foreign diplomatists and political intrigues, and overcoming all opposition by his brilliant intellect and the force of his will. In 1837 he wrote *Venetia*, a highly coloured, romantic description of the Italian adventures of Lord Byron. In the same year he entered Parliament and began his public career. Before he achieved full success in this sphere, he attained to the height of his literary fame in two *semi-political*

novels „*Coningsby* or the New Generation“ — 1844 — and „*Sybil* or the Two Nations“ in 1845. *Coningsby* is a daring attempt to portray the public men of his own time under fictitious, but very transparent characters. Sidonia, the Jew, is Disraeli himself. It is astonishing how the author revels in these descriptions of English High Life — a gay breakfast in a rural château, a sumptuous dinner, a magnificent evening reception, a steeple chase, a hunting party, the Christmas revels, the fashionable talk with the well-told anecdote, the brilliant repartee, the scandal, in short all the frivolities of society. He lavishes the glowing colours of his oriental imagination on these scenes of the splendour and luxury of the English aristocracy: another instance of that wonderful adaptability of the Jewish race, which on the one hand preserves through ages its characteristic features of mind and body, on the other assimilates itself in thought and feeling to the peculiarities of the people among whom their lot is cast. Disraeli is far too wary to try to hide his origin, on the contrary he pretends to be proud of it. „The Jews are the oldest aristocracy in the world“, „God has revealed himself only to the Semitic race“, — with these axioms he made a deep impression on the English who, being proud themselves, respect pride in others. Besides among a nation in which the Puritan veneration for the Chosen People survived, he had a better chance of asserting himself than in any other country.

Lady Novelists,

The Brontë Sisters, Mrs. Elizabeth Gaskell.

Three daughters of a poor country clergyman on the solitary moors of Yorkshire, Charlotte, Emily, Anne Brontë, possessed in a high degree the gift of painting „Elysium an ihres Kerkers Wand“. *Jane Eyre*, by *Currer Bell* — the nom de plume of Charlotte Brontë — had an extraordinary success both in England and Germany where it was dramatised by Charlotte Birchpfeifer. The plain-faced heroine, a simple governess, taming by her energy and her genius her brutal, self-willed, Byronic master, Rochester, the passionate style, the powerful descriptions, and the startling events of the story made a deep impression, especially on the ladies, and originated the sentimental governess-novel.

Of a higher rank are the novels of Mrs. Gaskell, whose charming novel *Cranford* 1851 has become a standard work of English literature. The description of this village of old maids and of their adventures is written with exquisite humour.

Dickens and Thackeray

are the greatest novelists the 19th century has produced in England. They have much in common, and differ in much. They are two good valiant knights bent on a great and hazardous venture: they have gone forth to fight the great dragon of Sham which had thriven so well on the fat soil of English life; they have taken the field against the hypocrisy, against the idol of false gentility, against humbug in every form. Dickens is the champion of the poor, the weak, the little, — he pleads for the lower order whose sufferings he knows so well; he is a man of intense feeling, emotional, sometimes over-sensitive; his strength lies in his heart not in his head. He is an idealist whose dearest dreams will never be realised. The heroes and heroines on whom he has lavished his fondest love, have never walked this earth. Thackeray, on the contrary, has a strong, masculine intellect; his keen glance penetrates into the innermost heart of things. All the veils and wrappers with which poor humanity endeavours to hide its shame, drop off one by one, until it stands revealed in all its hideous nakedness. He wields the dissecting knife of the most skilful anatomist and lays open the secrets of the human heart and mercilessly discloses the bacillus of Self. Thackeray is the most powerful satirist England has produced since the days of Swift and Fielding, but he is not cruel, spiteful, and malignant like Swift, nor frivolous and lascivious like Fielding. He has a kind and a loving heart, he is a thorough gentleman, truthful, independent, of the greatest delicacy of feeling, worshipping, nay idolising love, simplicity, genuineness and gentleness, which, however, are not found in his heroes united with greatness of intellect, strength of will, and success in the world. The persons on whom he lavishes his sympathy, are kind and amiable, but weak and somewhat silly like Amelia Sedley in *Vanity Fair*; they are brave and generous and unselfish, but somewhat awkward and ridiculous like Captain Dobbin in the same novel; they are noble-hearted, charitable, and loyal, but Quixotic dreamers and the dupes of the world, like Colonel Newcome. Thackeray is thoroughly at home among the higher classes, in the life of fashion, of club-land, of the aristocracy and he delights in exposing its hollowness, vain pretentions, and absurdities.

Charles Dickens, 1812—1870,

the people's poet sprang himself from the people. He was born at Portsmouth in 1812 where his father held a small post in the Navy Pay Depart-

ment. A few years later the family removed to London where the father became a reporter for the daily press. At an early period Charles was placed in an attorney's office, but he disliked the profession, which he was to quiz unmercifully in his novels, and became a reporter like his father, — gathering observations invaluable for the future novelist, both in the House of Commons and in the streets of London, the people of which he studied in all their oddities and humours, their slang and jargon. But his profession obliged him to see something of the province, and there is no better place to study the country and its inhabitants than the top of the stage-coach. The poetry of those old coaching-days nobody felt more deeply and expressed more powerfully than Dickens. These years devoted to the practical study of Town and Country were a compensation for the want of a learned education at school and colleges. Ignoring what others had seen and said, he said after his own fashion what he himself had seen and imagined. There is in English a language for prose and a language for poetry. Dickens broke down this distinction. He used the words of his mother tongue with royal independence; he pressed them into his service, as he found them; he forced them to march as fast as his thought and his thought went along with lightning speed.

His first appearance as an author he made as a contributor of sketches of character and city-life to the *Morning Chronicle*. Additions were made to these, and the whole of them were republished in two volumes as **Sketches by Boz** in 1836 and 1837. In the same year 1837 he began another series of a similar character, the **Pickwick Papers**, which made him famous and raised him at once to the summit of fame as a humourist.

The adventures and misadventures of a party of Cockney sportsmen formed the original idea proposed by the publisher. Boz was to write the chapters, and Seymour, a celebrated draughtsman, was to furnish the illustrations. But as the work went on, the scope of the papers expanded, both the sport and the club being forgotten or rarely referred to, in the varied scenes of life through which we follow the fortunes of the kind old bachelor Pickwick, his three friends, Tupman, Winkle, and Snodgrass, and his attached servant, the inimitable Sam Weller, an indescribable but perfectly natural compound of Cockney-slang and the coolest impudence with rich overbubbling humour and the tenderest fidelity. Criticism was lost in laughter. Of course, these principal characters, the members of the club, and Weller Senior and Junior were caricatures, but so many curious traits of character were depicted, with such overflowing, broad, kindly humour, and such a mass of comic incidents and detail, vivified by genius, that the effect of the work was to place Dickens at once at the head of all contemporary novelists.

The following novels grapple with the most glaring abuses of the social life of his time. In *Nicholas Nickleby* he exposes the fraud and tyranny of private schools which were free from all state-control, by describing the life of the hero as a schoolboy at Mr. Squeer's seminary of Dothboys Hall. *Oliver Twist*, written as a counterpart of Bulwer's Paul Clifford, is a story of low-class life, of vice, wretchedness, and misery.

The hero is an orphan, born and brought up in a workhouse at the tender mercy of boards of charity, beadles, and public nurses. At the age of eleven he is apprenticed by the authorities to an undertaker who treats the poor child shamefully. At last he runs away and reaches London after incredible hardships. Here he falls into the hands of a gang of thieves, pickpockets, and burglars. The interest of the story is admirably sustained: the horrible end of Sykes, the murderer of the girl Nancy; the trial, condemnation, and awful execution of the Jew, the head of the gang, and the deliverance of Oliver and his recognition by his kind grandfather, are told with great force. The story is certainly very emotional, sometimes bordering on the sensational, and has undoubtedly favoured the growth of the *Criminal Novel* which became the special domain of the friend of Dickens, Wilkie Collins.

In 1840 Dickens commenced a new species of fiction, entitled *Master Humphrey's Clock*, designed to comprise different tales under one general title and joined by a connecting narrative. Among these tales we find *the Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge*.

In the former of these the passion of gambling is depicted. There is something very striking in the conception of the helpless old gamester, in whom every other feeling is dead, but this one infatuation which survives with absorbing force. In beautiful contrast to the old man the poet places one of his noblest conceptions, *Little Nell*, the grand-child, pure-minded and innocent, gifted with those habits of pensive reflection and that energy which misfortune sometimes breeds in the buoyant and thoughtless spirit of childhood. She comforts, directs, sustains her grandfather with unshrinking firmness and love. The description of *the death of Nell* is the most pathetic passage in Dickens; we feel with the author that "when death strikes down the innocent and young, for every fragile form from which he lets the panting spirit free, a hundred virtues rise, in shape of mercy, charity, and love, to walk the world and bless it. Of every tear that sorrowing mortals shed on such green graves, some good is born, some gentler nature comes. In the destroyer's steps there spring up bright creations that defy his power, and his dark path becomes a way of light to heaven."

The poet's first trip to America in 1842 supplied him with material for two new works: *American Notes for General Circulation* and his great novel *Martin Chuzzlewit*. His impressions of American life were, at that time, highly unfavourable; the young giant was still unfledged, raw, and unlovely, and Dickens spoke his mind freely. At a later time of his life he saw the brighter side of the picture.

In *Martin Chuzzlewit* the poet represents a family in which the love of Self is the dominant passion. It is displayed in various forms and by all the members of the family. Old Martin Chuzzlewit is a very wealthy, self-willed, and stubborn man. To whom will he leave his money? that is the great question. The only one among his relatives who will not stoop to any meanness to secure the prey, his grand-son, young Martin Chuzzlewit, is too obstinate and selfish to think of his duty towards him and the girl to whom he is engaged. He is disinherited and goes to America where the conceited young man becomes an easy prey to the smart land-agents who sell him an estate at "Eden", a pestilential swamp on the banks of the Mississippi where he would have perished but for the devotion of his voluntary servant and partner, jolly Mark Tapley whose ambition is to come out strong under the most trying circumstances. The master-piece of delineation of character is Pecksniff, the architect, the English Tartuffe, the personification of the spirit of cant. Dickens treats him daintily, tenderly, lovingly, showing him in every possible situation. Give him a name, and call him "Humbug", every inch of him.

In 1843 the fertile author began that series of *Christmas Stories* which have delighted generations of grown-up people as well as of children for whom they were originally intended and in which he displayed to the full his wonderful fancy and his exquisite sensibility. The first of them was *A Christmas Carol in Prose*, the story of the old miser Scrooge, reclaimed and humanised by the Spirit of Christmas, the genius of love; a story full of overflowing humour, innocent merriment, exquisite tenderness, and deep pathos: the supernatural element blending in the most natural manner possible with the ordinary events of every day life. The man who wrote this little book did more to spread a spirit of good fellowship, of Christian charity, of pure and innocent joy, than many a teacher, lawgiver, and prophet.

In 1844 followed *the Chimes*, a goblin story; in 1845 *The Cricket on the Hearth*, both conceived in a similar spirit. *Dombey and Son* is the story of the starched and purse-proud London banker humbled and softened by misfortune. In 1850 Dickens finished the novel which is widely considered his most interesting work — *David Copperfield*, the story of a young literary man struggling up to fame as the author himself had done. In his great novel *Bleak House* Dickens ventures for the first time to enter also into the sacred precincts of the aristocracy.

The story exhibits and exposes the fearful and pernicious, nay incredible slowness, clumsiness, and costliness of the English law, tracing the disastrous influence which a prolonged law-suit has on every one concerned in it, but especially on young people, in this case two wards in chancery, of whom the one, a bright and charming boy, is unsettled and finally ruined — body and

soul — by the hazardous game of the lawsuit of Jarndyce versus Jarndyce. A number of excellently drawn characters lend life and variety to the story — Jo, the poor London street Arab on whom the poet lavishes his affection and who is finally 'moved on' out of life by the police; George, the simple and manly soldier; Mr. Becket, the shrewd and infallible, but kindhearted and chivalrous detective; proud and unhappy Lady Dedlock, and above all the charming heroine, Esther Summerson, so full of noble courage, devotion, sweet temper, kindness of heart, and bright intelligence.

In 1850 Dickens undertook a weekly serial called *Household Words* which became his property under the name of *All the Year round*. To this he contributed *A Child's Story of England* and his tale of a strike, called *Hard Times*. *Little Dorrit* depicted the touching devotion of a young girl to her selfish father, a prisoner for debt.

A Tale of Two Cities (London und Paris) is full of the horrors of the French Revolution. *Great Expectations*, *Our Mutual Friend*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* were the last fruits of his genius.

The popularity of the author increased when he began to read in public to enthusiastic audiences both in England and in America scenes from his novels: an art which he possessed to a marvellous degree. But the excitement and the fearful strain put on his nerves on these occasions, wore him out rapidly, and he died comparatively young in June 1870.

Dickens has certainly committed many errors of judgment; his characters are often overdrawn and exaggerated, his plots frequently badly developed. His humour is sometimes strained, his pathos maudlin and sentimental. His knowledge of life is restricted to that of the lower classes, and especially to the people of London, — but how much love and humanity lies embedded in his pages! Dickens was a great social reformer. He roused the authorities at last to begin the fight against ignorance, misery, and oppression which has brought about most beneficial changes in English society.

William Makepeace Thackeray, 1811—1863,

was born at Calcutta in 1811, the son of an official in the Indian Civil Service. At the age of six he was sent over to England to be educated. On his voyage Thackeray touched at St. Helena to see the "Corsican Ogre". He received his education in the old Charter-house School, then still in the heart of London within the roar of the city, and at Cambridge where he quizzed Tennyson's prize poem on Timbuctoo. His ambition was to be a painter, so he employed his fortune in travelling on the conti-

ment and spent some time at Weimar, where he was kindly received by Goethe, whom he amused with his talent of drawing caricatures. To his residence in Paris from 1832 to 1836 he owed his intimate knowledge of the French language and of the character of that people. Having returned to London he suffered some severe blows of fortune: he lost his money in an unsuccessful speculation and his young wife became insane. These events induced him to transfer his energy to a new field of action.

He began to contribute to *Fraser's Magazine* tales and sketches which appeared under the pseudonym of *Michael Angelo Titmarsh* and *George Fitz-boodle Esq.*, among these were his *Parish Sketch Book*, his *Irish Sketch Book*, and the *Hoggarty Diamond*. He then began to contribute to the *London Punch*, the inimitable Charivary and mirror of English society. Here appeared his *Jeames's Diary* and the *Snob Papers*; the former is the history of a London flunkey suddenly elevated to wealth by speculation in railway-shares, in the latter he begins his warfare against Snobbism as it spreads itself out and revels in London clubs and Westend drawing-rooms.

But the great success of the author was his *Vanity Fair* or a Noved without a Hero, a bitter satire on life in general and on English society in particular.

The heroine in this book without a hero is *Becky Sharp*, the cleverest, the most fascinating, the most unprincipled creature: all intellect, without a trace of conscience, of heart. But for this very reason she is a failure and all her intrigues and machinations are doomed to end in disappointment. She is the daughter of a tippling English drawing-master and a French ballet-girl, and she becomes an orphan at the age of seventeen. So she enters life under great disadvantages. But she has inherited the talent of her father, the cleverness, the lively disposition, the good looks, and the coquetry of her mother; and as she is not burdened with oversensibility, keeping a cool head and a cool heart, commanding and controlling her forces like a first-rate tactician, every person that chance throws in her way, becomes an instrument in her hands to help her to rise. A school-friend, tender-hearted and simple-minded Amelia Sedley, serves her as the hook by which she lifts herself into society and she all but succeeds in marrying Amelia's elder brother, a fat and foppish, vain and shy Indian nabob. But Becky is never greater than after defeat; she rallies and at once begins a new game. She accepts a position as governess in the house of a rich old country-squire, Sir Pitt Crawley. Here the author takes the opportunity of giving a picture of English high-life sixty years ago. What types these Crawleys! the brutal, ignorant, mean and shabby baronet and his brother the rector, a jovial, foxhunting and portwine-drinking clergyman, with his scheming wife; and the two sons

of the baronet, the stiff and starched, respectable Mr Pitt Crawley, and the wild and rakish Rawdon Crawley, an officer in the guards; and last not least old Miss Crawley, a desperate free-thinker and good-liver, utterly selfish and self-willed, the heiress before whom all cringe. How splendidly Rebecca manages them all, at least the men, each of whom is in love with her! But she commits a blunder; she marries the gay, good-hearted spend-thrift whilst, if she had waited a little longer, she might have had the old baronet himself. But undismayed she sets boldly to work and somehow wriggles into society, the society of the Prince Regent! The great Marquis of Steyne, the worthy friend of the Prince, as heartless and corrupted as his master, takes her up, because she amuses him by her brilliancy and daring. But again she has blundered. She does not count with the heart of her husband nor does she imagine that with all his faults he is a gentleman. So his clumsy jealousy spoils her game; he insults the marquis and they are disgraced, their creditors who had until now been held at bay, are now down upon them and they would be ruined, but that the great events of history intervene. The campaign of 1815 finds Rawdon Crawley with the army in Belgium. And now the poet sings of greater things and puts in striking and brilliant contrast the gigantic struggle of Waterloo and the little human interests that pull the wires of the puppets which play in the tremendous drama. But we will not follow Becky through her decadence, her shifts and tricks, her ups and downs. If the poet makes a mistake, it is this that he cannot resist dragging her through the mire and worrying her, so as to lay stress on the moral of the story that mere cleverness is sure to end in failure.

In 1848 Thackeray published his second great novel *the History of Pendennis*, an attempt to describe the development of the English gentleman of the age of Victoria, as in *Vanity Fair* he had depicted the gentleman of the beginning of the century. He takes Fielding's Tom Jones as his model. Pendennis is scarcely a higher type of humanity, though the difference in manners and feelings, brought about in the course of a century, has saved him from some of the lapses of Tom Jones.

In 1851 Thackeray appeared before the public as a lecturer. His subject was the English Humourists of the 18th century, and all the rank and fashion of the capital flocked to hear their favourite author speak of his great predecessors, of Swift, Addison, Congreve, Steele, Fielding, Sterne, and Goldsmith.

The Queen Anne period touched upon in these lectures supplied him material for *The History of Henry Esmond*, probably his best constructed and altogether most satisfactory novel.

For once satire steps into the second rank. The leading characters are not only good, noble, generous, but also of sterling quality: brave, intelligent, energetic. The interest is sustained to the end, though we cannot altogether be spared the disappointment of seeing men and women worthy of our regard

and admiration, gradually sink from their exalted position and the gold of their natures be turned into mere brass by the touchstone of life and its temptations.

Esmond is as excellent an historical novel as any produced by Scott. The poet is thoroughly at home in the age of William of Orange and of Queen Anne; he has caught not only the spirit but the very language of the time. We witness the Great Revolution, the arrival of William in England, the plots to bring back the exiled king, the outbreak of the great war, the death of William, the rule of the Marlboroughs. We are present at Blenheim and Ramillies and the taking of Lille. We plunge into the conspiracies around the death-bed of Queen Anne when the pretender, Prince James Stuart, was secretly in London and lost the crown which was within his grasp, through his utter folly and frivolity. We are introduced into the coffee-houses of London among the Wits: Dick Steele, the jolly soldier, always kind and often drunk; bright and genial Addison; witty and frivolous Congreve; scowling and arrogant Swift. But all this is only the background from which the touching story of the house of Castlewood stands out in splendid relief: Esmond himself, the disinterested and high-minded cavalier, every inch a gentleman; Lady Castlewood, his kind and lovely benefactress, and her daughter Beatrix, a haughty, spoiled, but fascinating beauty. Esmond had worshipped Lady Castlewood with the unselfish devotion of a boy when her wild and faithless husband still lived; he had for a time transferred his passion to her daughter when after a prolonged absence she suddenly flashed upon him in all her bewitching beauty; but when he finds her utterly worthless of his love, the heroic warrior, the political leader, seeing all his plans of bringing back the Stuarts to England shipwrecked through the worthlessness of the son of James II, finds peace and is reconciled to his fate in the arms of Lady Castlewood, now released by the death of her husband. He emigrates with her to Virginia, and when death takes her from him, he sits down to write the story, of which I have tried to give an outline.

Thackeray's fourth great novel appeared in 1855: *The Newcomes*, a picture of the life of his time with its faults and follies, its hypocrisy and injustice. The leading theme of the story is the misery occasioned by ill-assorted marriages. The real hero is Colonel Newcome, a counterpart to Fielding's Squire Allworthy. His high sense of honour, his simplicity, his never-failing kindness, his antique courtesy, his misfortunes and ruin through the knavery of others, his death as a poor pensioner in the Charterhouse, form one of the most touching pictures in literature.

Once more Thackeray came before the British public as a lecturer, giving a brilliant but rather saddening picture of English society and royalty in his *Lectures on the Four Georges*.

His last novel, 1857, may be considered a continuation of Henry Esmond: *The Virginians*. The work embraces pictures of England in the reign of George II and III and places before us the literary men of that period: Chesterfield, Garrick, Johnson, and Goldsmith, but with Washington and the War of Independence in the background.

The great novelist died suddenly on the Christmas Eve of 1863 and was interred amidst the heroes of the Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey, many of whom he had so eloquently interpreted.

Charles Kingsley, 1819—1875,

is undoubtedly one of the representative men in the English life of last century. The rector of Eversley was a strong-minded, manly, and resolute man who grappled heroically with the social and religious problems of his age, who even where he is wrong commands our sympathy and admiration.

A strong *Catholic Reaction* had set in in England about the middle of the century taking its rise in the University of Oxford and spreading rapidly among the higher classes. *Newman*, a fellow of Oriel College and rector of St. Mary's in Oxford gave the first impulse to the momentous change in opinion by professing himself a Roman Catholic in 1845. He became one of the great lights of the Catholic church and died as a Cardinal. *Manning* followed his example and also became a cardinal. Their mentor, the originator of the whole movement, Professor *Pusey* at Oxford, refrained from taking the last and decisive step, but fostered the extreme High-Church movement, called *Ritualism*, which would leave but one single difference from the Church of Rome, viz. that it refuses to acknowledge the absolute authority of the pope. The ritualistic movement spread rapidly especially in fashionable society. The word Protestant was objected to, nay tabooed by these people who fought against the spirit of the reformation, though they continued to enjoy the revenues and endowments of the church founded by Elizabeth.

It was against this party that Kingsley took the field as the champion of Protestantism. He was a combative nature, fighting against the blandishments and intrigues of Rome, but fighting as hotly against the Materialism and Scepticism of the age; fighting also for the Poor and Oppressed. Hating modern capitalism and the exploitation of working men by their employers, he was to a certain degree a socialist, but he expected salvation not from a revolution but from self-help and association. The wide-spread immorality he endeavoured to put down by the spread of manly sports and athletics, — opening up a safety-valve for the noxious gases of sloth and luxury. This is the reason why his opponents ridiculed his endeavours by giving them the nick-name of Muscular Christianity.

But this strong and hearty, independent, and lofty-minded man is the true Saxon type; there is something of a Luther about him.

Kingley's first appearance as an author took place in 1848 when he published his *Saint's Tragedy*, the story of Elizabeth of Hungary, land-gravine of Thuringia, a saint of the Romish almanach. The poem is a protest against superstitious homage and false miracles and gives a vivid picture of mediaeval life.

In *Alton Locke*, Tailor and Poet, an autobiography, 1850, the poet wishes to exhibit the evils of competition and the grievances of the artisan class in the large towns. The same social questions are discussed in *Yeast*, a Problem, 1851, which is devoted more especially to the condition of the agricultural labourers. In the two following great novels he wished to hold up a mirror to the religious struggles of his own time by picturing remote but interesting episodes of history suggestive of comparisons and contrasts, *Hypatia* or New Friends with an old face, 1853, and *Westward Ho*; 1855.

In *Hypatia* we are present at the death-struggle of heathendom in Alexandria, the centre and focus of antiquity. We are in the year 412 A. D. and witness the desperate fight between Official Christianity, (in which the name of Christ is a mere pretext to establish a hierarchy which desires to enslave the world in faithful imitation of Imperial Rome and preaches a gospel of hate instead of the gospel of love,) and dying Antiquity represented by the lovely idealist Hypatia, the Athenian, imbued with the spirit of the art of Phidias and the philosophy of Plato. She is a tragic character because she struggles for a noble cause in which she believes — the attempt at putting new life into Greek poetic philosophy; — but this cause is doomed to die, to succumb to the grovelling superstition of Christian fanatics, because she cannot find men whom she could inspire with her own faith, enthusiasm, and purity. When the Christian mob tears the fair professor to pieces, we should feel disheartened, if the poet had not introduced two elements into his story which inspire us with new hope for the future of the world: the Bishop of Cyrene, Synesius, the representative of practical Christianity, kind, enthusiastic, truly charitable — and the Goths! — when these two elements are firmly welded together, we need not despair of the future of man.

In *Westward Ho* we find ourselves in the turmoil of the brilliant and bracing period of Elizabethan England. We witness the great voyages and adventures of the heroes of Devon: Sir Amyas Leigh, Raleigh, Hawkins, Drake. We are present at sea-fights in the Spanish Main and in South America; we rejoice at the defeat of the Armada; we watch the plots of the Jesuits, and proud Spaniards, English burghers, Puritans, seamen and soldiers pass before our eyes. We see an endless variety of incidents, characters, and scenes of richest colouring. But the aim and end of the story, undoubtedly, is to show that the Protestantism of the Age of Elizabeth was all-important to the cause of freedom and of true religion.

George Eliot, 1819—1880.

Nobody who reads the works of this author full of deep and subtle reasoning, of lofty and impassioned feeling, of characters drawn to the life, — the mysteries of their souls being lit up with magic power, — in a terse and masculine style full of point and humour, would for a moment imagine that they were written by a woman.

Mary Anne Evans, who concealed her identity under the name of *George Eliot*, was born in 1819 at Nuneaton in Warwickshire, where she received an excellent education, very uncommon for English girls at that time, comprising Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. She lived in the province till 1851 feeding her intellect on Herbert Spencer, James Stuart Mill, and on German philosophy. Thus she gradually struggled up out of the narrowness of English religious beliefs into what seemed to her the bracing freedom of a wide and comprehensive philosophy, a heroic struggle in which she had to fight her mental battles all alone. How much she owed in this struggle for light and freedom to the great German thinkers of the liberal school may be gathered from the fact that her first publications were a translation of the *Life of Jesus* by David Strauss and of Ludwig Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*. In 1851 George Eliot settled in London and took part in the editing of the *Westminster Review*. At this time she formed an intimate friendship with the philosopher and literary critic G. H. Lewes whose *Life of Goethe* was, for many years, considered the best biography of the German poet.

Her first literary attempt was a work called *Scenes of Clerical Life*, 1858. In the following year appeared her famous novel *Adam Bede*, in which she shows herself as a master of the "Real" school, in depicting scenes and characters from low life. *The Mill on the Floss* and *Silas Marner* were written in the same strain describing the life of humble people in the country, whose characters are drawn with extraordinary truth and skill. Her greatest novels are *Romola* 1863 and *Middlemarch* 1872.

In *Romola* the author for once leaves England to give a brilliant historical picture of Florence at the end of the 15th century. The scene opens with the death of Lorenzo dei Medici and we are plunged at once into the whirl of party strife between the various factions of the Republic. Here the author succeeds in giving a highly dramatic representation of the intense life of a great Italian commonwealth at the time of the Renaissance. On the one hand we are shown the new delight in the study of ancient art, poetry, and philosophy; the eagerness to produce and to collect works of beauty worthy to rank with the masterpieces of Greece and Rome; the indifference to spiritual life, the desire to free one's self from the trammels of mediaeval superstition, to leave the "hereafter"

to take care of itself in the enjoyment of the present hour, — on the other hand an undercurrent of strong religious feeling, yearning for a deeper and holier inner life in harmony with the will of Heaven: a reaction alike against the religious indifference of the wealthier classes and against a Church which had sunk to the lowest depths of degradation under Alexander VI. It is Savonarola who lends words of fire to this longing for a reformation of the Church, a regeneration of the people. For indeed the end seems nigh at hand: Louis the Twelfth of France has invaded Italy and his army of bloodthirsty mercenaries hover about the gates of Florence. All these scenes pass before us in magic reality. But as admirable as the historical background with the towering figure of Savonarola, are the fictitious characters of the story: beautiful, noble and high-souled Romola, the daughter of a great scholar and herself at home in classic art and philosophy, but with the naïve ignorance of a child in matters of the real world, — and the Greek youth Tito Melema, of extraordinary beauty, insinuating manners, brilliant scholarship, but a soft nature, vain and false. The conception of these characters, the gradual debasement, final ruin and tragic death of Melema is one of the highest achievements of English fiction.

Middlemarch is the most voluminous of George Eliot's novels and is generally considered the crown of her literary work. Novelists are but too apt to show us the life of the capital; in *Middlemarch*, on the contrary, we are given a masterly description of provincial life, the life of the middle classes in a small industrial town and its agricultural neighbourhood. The squire, the chief magistrate, the mayor, the great banker, the chief solicitor, the three doctors, some clergymen, some small landed proprietors, some land-agents, farmers and labourers, all of them with their wives and children are "the *dramatis personae*". But in this little world what social struggles, ambitions, jealousies, intrigues, catastrophes! The heroine of the story who passes through the life of this town like some heavenly messenger without soiling the hem of her garment, is *Dorothea Brooke*. The things for which others strive and struggle, have no importance for her. She leads an inner life of high purposes, noble duties, of intense, exalted feeling. She is divinely beautiful, but without a trace of coquetry. Judging her own actions by the highest moral standard she is naïvely sincere and trustful and trusting in others. She feels the misery about her as a personal grief; it is impossible to her not to relieve the sufferer; yet there is no harshness or conceit or pharisaism in her nature, she is full of pity and tenderness for the shortcomings of others. In her intense yearning to devote herself to some worthy task she refuses the easy life of worldly happiness offered to her by the side of the young and amiable squire and gives her hand to an elderly clergyman who enjoys the reputation of great learning. But Mr Casaubon is an intensely selfish man. He is nearly 50, he is ailing, he has no sympathy for any living creature. He lives in a world of musty books, in the dust of a distant past collecting the materials for a great work: the *Key to all the Mythologies*, which will never be finished. No wonder that Dorothea is tragically disenchanted. But fate grants her a compensation for her self-sacrifice. Her husband has a nephew, Will Ladislaw, a bright, generous, and handsome young artist; Casaubon hates him for all the qualities which he lacks himself, and resolves to make his wife swear that in case of his death she will never marry his youthful

rival, which oath he is sure would be sacred to her, even though it chained her free spirit for ever. A stroke prevents him from accomplishing his desire; but when his testament is opened, it appears that his widow was to forfeit the inheritance in case she married Ladislav. This cruel insult has of course the opposite effect of the one intended; for it is the very idea of sacrifice that finally determines her to renounce the inheritance of Casaubon and to marry the man she loves.

The last of her greater novels, *Daniel Deronda*, with its somewhat exaggerated enthusiasm for Judaism, caused a great sensation and was much admired by many, severely criticised by some of her readers.

In 1874 she published a *Collection of Poems*, among which we find the following lines which express her deepest yearning:

“O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence, live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man’s search
To vaster issues. So to live is heaven:
To make undying music in the world,
Breathing as beauteous order that controls
With growing sway the growing life of man.
This is life to come. May I reach
That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardour, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty,
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.”

The greatest woman-novelist of England died in 1880.

Essayists, Historians, Naturalists, Philosophers.

Thomas Carlyle, 1795—1881,

exercised a great influence on the intellectual life of Victorian England. He rose like an ancient prophet, grand, solemn, and rugged, to call his people back from the business of money-making and worldly pleasures to a higher conception of the ideals of life. Whilst Ruskin appealed to the aesthetic feeling to make the life of his people sweet and beautiful, Carlyle tried to strengthen the will and to produce characters determined by the categorical imperative of duty.

He was born in 1795 at Ecclefechan near Dumfries in Scotland. He studied languages and literatures, and was the first Englishman who possessed a comprehensive knowledge of the new literature of Germany. He was an ardent admirer of Goethe with whom he entered into a highly interesting correspondence. A marriage which he contracted in 1826 with Jane Welsh, a woman of character and wit who owned a small property in Dumfriesshire, enabled him to lead an independent life devoted to study and literature. He took up his residence at Chelsea in close proximity to the capital and yet away from its noise and bustle. From here he issued his oracles, philippics, warnings, and exhortations up to his death in 1881.

He started in his literary career with an Essay on Goethe's Faust in the New Edinburgh Review 1822. In the London Magazine he published a Life of Schiller. Then followed translations from the German: Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, parts of the works of Jean Paul, Tieck etc. He published Essays on Jean Paul and on Burns in the Edinburgh Review; then *Sartor Resartus*, or the Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh, a philosophical novel, written in the eccentric mannerism of Jean Paul, interwoven with many odd and whimsical disquisitions and personal remembrances. In this book Carlyle used for the first time his peculiar style which seems to have been formed on Greek and German models, and which seemed to agree so well with his rugged personality. Then followed his first great historical work: *The French Revolution*, a History, 1837. Then his famous book on *Heroes, Hero-worship and the Heroic in History* (1841) in which he expounds his theory that history is made and the progress of the world is brought about, not by the masses, "by mobs and parliaments", but by great men, — prophets like Mahomet, poets like Dante and Shakespeare, priests like Luther and John Knox, authors like Johnson and Rousseau, rulers like Cromwell and Napoleon. The next work was *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* (1845), the first biography of the Protector which presents a life-size picture that does justice to the greatest ruler of England. His last and greatest work is his *History of Frederick the Great* in 6 volumes, 1858—1865, inspired with sincere admiration for the great king of Prussia.

The most popular among the *great historians* of the 19th century was

Thomas Babington Macaulay, 1800—1859,

a great statesman and speaker, member of several Whig cabinets, raised to the peerage in 1857; and buried in Westminster Abbey. His most

important works are *Historical and Literary Essays*, written in a lucid and picturesque style — on Milton, Byron, Bacon, Johnson, Lord Clive, Warren Hastings, Frederick the Great, Ranke's History of the Popes etc.

2. *Lays of Ancient Rome*, a collection of ballads in which he tried to reconstruct ancient Roman history from popular ballads. These poems as well as his two poems from modern history: "Ivry, a Song of the Huguenots" and "The Armada, a Fragment", prove Macaulay's extraordinary talent for the historical ballad.

3. *The History of England* from the Accession of James II, the great work of his life. Written in a brilliant and fascinating style it reads like the most interesting novel and was eagerly studied both in England and on the Continent. The 1st volume gives a clear and graphic survey of English history up to the Restoration of the Stuarts and ends with a most interesting description of England at the death of Charles II. The hero of the first part is Oliver Cromwell, the hero of the whole work is William of Orange. As master of picturesque writing Macaulay is unrivalled, as an historian he is not a safe guide, as he is a passionate pleader for the Whigs against the Tories.

His great history ends with the Peace of Utrecht. *Lord Mahon* the Earl of Stanhope wrote a continuation in his *History from the Peace of Utrecht to the Peace of Versailles (1714 to 1783)*.

Other great historians are *George Grote*, who published a famous *History of Greece 1846—1856*; *Edward Augustus Freeman*, who wrote a *History of the Norman Conquest of England 1867—1879*; *Henry Hallam*, author of a standard work, "*Constitutional History of England*"; *James Anthony Froude* published a "*History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth 1856—1870*." *Henry Thomas Buckle* planned the publication of a great "*History of Civilisation in England*", of which, however, only three volumes appeared, a most interesting work according to which the history of the world is an evolution brought about by certain laws of nature which work independent of the will of Man.

In the long line of the great English representatives of *Natural Science*, who represent one of the glories of the 19th century none left a deeper trace on the whole „Weltanschauung" of modern life than

Charles Darwin, 1809—1882.

His works *On the Origin of Species* by Natural Selection in 1859 and the *Descent of Man* 1871 caused a revolution in the thoughts of men,

and not only in science, for the idea of "*evolution*" was soon applied also to other spheres of human life and work. The first effect of Darwin's books was a furious opposition of theologians and aesthetes, until it was gradually understood that the Darwinian theory of an upward development of Man through the ages, was nobler and inspired more hope for the future than the belief in original perfection and beauty and gradual degradation. *John Tyndall* and *Thomas Henry Huxley* continued and supported his work. The English thinker who applied Darwin's theory of evolution to *Philosophy* was *Herbert Spencer*. His vast system of Synthetic Philosophy in ten volumes, completed in 1898, is the most important contribution to Philosophy made in England, in the second half of the 19th century.

Literary and Art Criticism

were chiefly represented by *Matthew Arnold* and *Walter Pater*. *Matthew Arnold*, 1822—1888, wrote *Essays in Criticism* on modern literature in general, endeavouring to throw a bridge across the Channel, in order to bring isolated England into closer contact with continental culture, especially with Goethe. In *Culture and Anarchy*, and in *Literature and Dogma* he tried to expand the horizon of his countrymen by attacking their social and religious prejudices; the words Philistine and Philistinism which he naturalised in his country, were "made in Germany". *Matthew Arnold's* poems are the delight of highly intellectual minds in England.

Walter Pater, 1839 to 1894, was one of the leaders of the aesthetic movement in Oxford. He published excellent art essays on Winckelmann, Michel Angelo, Lionardo etc. His novel "*Marius the Epicurean*" is one of the best representations of Roman life.

Recent Authors and Authors of Today.

No author of the first rank has crossed the threshold of the 20th century in England. Among the poets who died before or soon after the end of the 19th century *George Meredith* and *Robert Louis Stevenson* stand in the first rank. *George Meredith*, 1829—1909. He began his literary work with a small volume of poems accompanied by a fantastic Oriental story, *The Shaving of Shagpat*. Then followed some novels, the first of which *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, 1859, was a powerful work, rich in humour and tragic pathos. In 1879 he published *The Egoist*, a high-class comedy which gave a faithful, though not flattering picture of English society.

His last novel was *Diana of the Crossways*. In this and in fact in all his novels he has created a number of lovely and charming types of womanhood.

Robert Louis Stevenson, 1850 to 1894, who lies buried in Samoa, is a second Defoe, the master of the novel of adventure. His *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, *The Master of Ballantrae*, *Catriona* are the favourite reading of boys and of many grown-up people too.

Among living authors I mention **Mrs. Humphrey Ward**, the niece of Matthew Arnold, the type of the highly cultivated modern English lady, who as the daughter of an Oxford professor and wife of a distinguished college tutor helped to inaugurate the movement of the higher education of women. In her *Robert Elsmere*, 1888, she took up the magic wand which George Eliot had dropped at her death by venturing to face the great religious problem of modern life and to find a solution in which she breaks once and for all with the old world beliefs, but on the other hand fiercely opposes the materialism of modern freethinkers.

Robert Elsmere is the bearer of her ideas and the novel is the history of their growth in the hero. It shows how he works them out and how he dies for them. He wishes to raise the person of Christ out of the haze of myth with which he has been enwrapped and to reveal him as the great social reformer. He desires to prove by word and deed that this Jesus in the purity and intensity of his love may still be the standard-bearer and champion in the great modern struggle against ignorance, folly, and sin.

In this and in her other novels Mrs. Humphrey Ward has deeply impressed the highly educated part of the English public. Her style is clear, rapid, and always interesting; she moves along more freely and easily than her great predecessor.

Thomas Hardy (born 1840) has been represented as the English Zola. His pessimistic view of life which describes Man as the victim of Fate and Circumstance does not make the reader happy. The most popular of his realistic novels are *The Return of the Native*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and *Jude the Obscure*. A frame story written in the spirit and with the humour of Chaucer is *Some Crusted Characters*.

The foremost of living English authors is undoubtedly

Rudyard Kipling (born in 1865), the poet of Greater England, the first author who lets the flashlight of his talent light up Indian and English colonial life in general. Born in Bombay, the son of an art-teacher in the Indian Civil Service and a student of native life and manners, Rudyard Kipling was educated in England. He then returned

to India and settled at Lahore as a newspaper writer, with every opportunity of becoming intimately acquainted both with India itself and with the peculiar society of English residents in India. But he studied also other parts of the great English Empire, as well as the sister-nation on the other side of the Atlantic, so that he may actually be described as the present poet laureate of the Anglo-Saxon race.

He is a master of the *Short Story*. His *Plain Tales from the Hills* deal with Indian life, especially in Anglo-Indian society, and in the barracks. The humour and the loving delight with which he depicts *Tommy Atkins*, the English private, has won him the heart of the British soldier. *Soldiers Three* and *Wireless and Other Stories* vary the theme. *Kim*, a Novel 1901, describes the adventures of a half-caste child growing up among Hindus and shows an intimate knowledge of native life. His most famous book of world-wide renown, is the *Jungle Book*, relating the wonderful adventures of Mowgli, a man-child in the land of the beasts of the Jungle, and reveals a most extraordinary intimacy with the habits and characters of wild beasts. The descriptions of animal life in the forest are so graphic and natural that we do not for a moment doubt the possibility of the events reported in the story. The *Just So Stories* are the most delightful reading for children and for grown-ups. The story of "How the Elephant got his trunk" has made many people cry with laughter. *Puck of Pook's Hill* is another fascinating child's book, in which scenes from English history are reenacted before two modern English children by the magic of a fairy.

Kipling has also written much verse in a popular, droll and amusing style, always in a patriotic, sometimes in the Jingo spirit of Music Halls. His poems (Barrack Room Ballads a. o.) chiefly refer to military life and to the glories of the British empire and its wonderful destination. Thus he is indeed the 'romancier' of Imperial England.

American Literature.

INTRODUCTION.

There is no parallel in history to the rise of the United States of America; it must be attributed in the first place to the vast resources of that country, in the second place to the indomitable energy, daring, and shrewdness of the Anglo-Saxon settlers. But the stern matter-of-fact commonsense of that race and the practical work that had to be done by it, were unfavourable to the growth of art and poetry. That race of hardy pioneers had to rough it both in the grim struggle against savage nature and in the ensuing struggle for independence against England. Moreover the gloomy Puritanism which prevailed in the New England States threw a dark shadow on the people and clipped the wings of fancy. But as state after state emerged out of chaos into safe and settled prosperity and the fierceness of the struggle for conquest subsided, wants and longings of a higher order made themselves felt, more time and more intelligence could be devoted to culture, and the eagerness, thoroughness, practical acuteness, and the public spirit of the Americans which had achieved such astounding results in the world of material interests, addressed themselves to the new and noble task of educating these modern barbarians into civilised men. At one time, however, it appeared as if the rising commonwealth was to be stopped in its upward career, nay hurled back into chaos: when the great Civil War (1860—1865) threatened to break up the Union. But the danger was overcome, and for the last 45 years, America has continued to advance and is now a world-power whose influence is felt everywhere. And all this time the progress of the States in general culture has been prodigious. It is a pleasure to see the young giant achieve as it were at one bound what the older civilisation of Europe accomplished in slow and gradual development. No princes, no courts

helped or hindered these citizens of a free country; they have done the work by themselves founding schools, colleges, universities, opening libraries, galleries, laboratories, observatories, encouraging learning, favouring independent scientific research, fostering literature by liberal patronage. From year to year the standard of literary productions has risen, and by this time American literature has thrown off the swaddling clothes of English influence and stands on its own feet; nay we may boldly maintain that both in fiction and poetry she has become a formidable rival.

Beginnings.

Even after their defection from England the United States at first depended in literature on the food supplied by the mother country. Here and there the recollections of the great War of Independence and the local patriotism of the New England farmer vented themselves in songs which had a racy flavour and delightfully naïve freshness about them. From the time before the War dates *Shackburg's Yankee Doodle*, written in 1755 as a kind of challenge flung in defiance to the French detractors of the rising nation in Canada. Another well known poem "*Home, Sweet Home*", expressing the true Saxon delight in the simple pleasures of the domestic hearth, was written by the American poet *John Howard Payne*, though it made its first appearance in England in a play called "*Clari*" which was performed by Charles Kemble at Covent Garden Theatre in London 1830.

The first American author who made himself a name in English literature and has remained a favourite wherever English is spoken or understood, is



Washington Irving, 1783—1859.

Born in New York in the year which secured American independence, he studied at Columbia College, travelled in Europe for several years and settled in New York in 1806 where he published a humoristic periodical, *Salmagundi*, full of the piquant gossip of the New York society. In 1809 appeared the amusing "*History of New York by Diedrich Knickerbocker*", a charming burlesque of old Dutch colonist life, a satire which quizzed the aristocracy of New York of Dutch descent, henceforth called the Knickerbocker families. In 1815 he paid a long visit to Europe which found its echo in works of fiction and of history: First his famous *Sketch*

Book by which he became a classic of English literature. In it we find the masterly description of Stratford-on-Avon, where he succeeds in conjuring up the merry old England of Elizabeth; the touching story of the Broken Heart, where he describes the slow and sad dying of Sarah Curran, the bride of Moore's friend Robert Emmet, the Irish rebel; and the humorous story of Rip van Winkle, the amiable hen-pecked vagabond who went to sleep when King George III reigned in America, and awoke when the stars and stripes waved over his favourite tavern. Then followed his novel of *Bracebridge Hall*, and his *Tales of a Traveller*. From 1824 to 1828 he resided in Spain studying the history of the country whose sons found the way to America. The result of these studies were his *Life of Columbus*, *Conquest of Granada*, *Companions of Columbus*, and in 1832 his delightful *Alhambra Tales*. In 1842 he returned to Madrid, but this time as American ambassador, for the United States had started their noble practice of selecting their representatives not among men of high birth and great wealth, but of sending their great authors to represent American thought and progress. As early as 1846, however, Irving resigned his place and lived in dignified repose up to his death in his old Dutch mansion called Sunny-Side on the East bank of the river Hudson, devoting his leisure to writing a *Biography of Oliver Goldsmith*, a *Life of Mahomet*, a *Life of Washington*.

Washington Irving has much in common with Addison, whom he resembles in his stately and dignified bearing, his breadth of view, his wisdom, his amiable humour, his sympathy for all that is great, and good, and beautiful, his moral elevation void of austerity, the stately elegance of his style with its well-poised and sonorous sentences. Indeed he seems rather to belong to the classic period of Queen Anne, than to the romantic age of Scott and Byron. The following passage from the Introduction of his *Sketch Book* may serve as an example of the quiet humour peculiar to him:

I had an earnest desire to see the great men of the earth. We have, it is true, our great men in America; not a city but has an ample share of them. I have mingled among them in my time, and been almost withered by the shade into which they cast me: for there is nothing so baleful to a small man as the shade of a great one, particularly the great man of a city. But I was anxious to see the great men of Europe: for I had read in the works of various philosophers, that all animals degenerated in America, and man among the number. A great man of Europe, thought I, must therefore be as superior to a great man of America, as a peak of the Alps to a highland of the Hudson; and in this idea I was confirmed by observing the comparative importance and swelling magnitude of many English travellers among us, who, I was assured, were very little people

in their own country. I will visit this land of wonders, thought I, and see the gigantic race from which I am degenerated.

We cannot imagine a stronger contrast to Washington Irving, the accomplished gentleman and courtier, the refined and classical writer, than

Edgar Allan Poe, 1809 to 1849,

whose life and work may be summed up in the words with which Goethe characterised Bürger: Er konnte sich nicht beherrschen und so zerrann ihm sein Leben wie sein Dichten. He was born at Boston, of parents of gentle origin who had taken to the stage for a livelihood. When he was left an orphan at the age of two, he was adopted by a wealthy childless couple named Allan, and by them was educated at school both in England and in America. He studied at the University of Virginia, and at the Military Academy of West Point. When the wayward and eccentric young man was expelled from the latter institution in consequence of intentional breaches of discipline, Mr. Allan refused to see him again and when he died, did not even mention him in his will. Homeless and penniless, the spoiled child of a rich man, he tried to live by his pen, becoming the editor of a periodical at Richmond. There in 1836 in spite of his precarious and small income he ventured to marry his cousin, a girl of 14, a lovely and accomplished creature, to whom he was devoted. But now the tragic disease began to develop which finally overclouded his genius and destroyed his life: alcoholism; a process accelerated by the grief over the prolonged sufferings and the death of his wife in 1846. A few years later the poet died in a mysterious fashion at Baltimore, having been picked up senseless in the street from where he was conveyed to the town-hospital. His life and his genius have a tragical bias. Already in a Collection of his Early Poems we find in a poem named "*Spirits of the Dead*" a reference to Poe's all absorbing thought, that death is not omnipotent, that sentience is not extinguished in the grave, and that the dead are not wholly unconscious or heedless of the deeds of the living. This mysterious mania haunted him through life and tainted all his works with its horrors. As he grew older his fancy became more and more sickly and gloomy and what it produced seemed to be revelations of a twilight world hovering between life and death. But no American poet comes near to Poe in originality of invention, boldness of imagination, and in the masterly treatment of his language. Admirable is his art to create the desired disposition of the mind in the soul of the reader.

In *the Raven* for instance he produced this disposition by a wonderful choice of words allied with a deep poetic sentiment, as in the following strophe:

But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing further then he uttered; not a feather then he fluttered
Till I scarcely more than muttered: "Other friends have flown before,
On the morrow he will leave me, as my hopes have flown before."
Then the bird said "Nevermore."

This same art of weaving about the soul of the reader and still more of the hearer that indefinable magic atmosphere which holds him as by a spell, Poe has practised with conscious skill in his wonderful tales: *Tales of Mystery, Imagination and Humour*, and *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*. He holds the reader fast from the beginning like Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* "with the glittering eye" and does not let him go before he has hunted him through all the stages of excitement, vague fear, and horror. Every sentence is a mesh of the net in which the soul of the reader is entangled. The art begins with the choice of the sensational title: "the Long Box", "King Pest", "the Angel of the Odd", "Thou art the Man!", "The Premature Burial", "The Tell-tale Heart", "The Masque of the Red Death", "The Descent into the Maelström", "The Pit and the Pendulum".*)

His favourite domain is the dark side of human nature, the borderland between this life and the life beyond. And he is fully in earnest, he believes himself in the ghosts which he conjures up. Others of his tales we might call his *Detective Stories*, such as "the Gold Bug" which is a masterpiece of construction, "the Purloined Letter" from which Sardou borrowed the subject of his *Pattes de Mouche*, and "the Murders of the Rue Morgue", when we are gradually led up to the discovery that the frightful crimes have been committed by a gorilla. Poe revived the pseudo-scientific descriptions of travels after the manner of Swift. Such are "Arthur Gordon Pym", "The Manuscript Found in a Bottle", "The Balloon Hoax" and his "*Adventure of One Hans Pfaal*", a regular *voyage à la lune*, the model of the stories of Jules Verne.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1809—1882.

The greatest poet of America in the course of the 19th century is Longfellow, a representative and champion of his country in the same

*) Compare Engel's article on Poe in his *Geschichte der Englischen Literatur*.

spirit and with the same effect as Tennyson represented the English half of the Anglo-Saxon race. Though inferior to Tennyson in poetic power, he is superior to him by his endeavours to make European literature and especially that of Germany accessible to the American mind. Whilst Tennyson remained typically English, neither affected by, nor affecting continental thought and poetry, thus cutting himself off from the poetical brotherhood of nations, Longfellow's influence has not been restricted to his people, but has been truly international. He has largely contributed to bring about that mutual and intimate sympathy of the American intellect with that of Germany, which is represented by millions of intelligent, useful, and patriotic settlers in the United States, — patriotic as enthusiastic admirers of their adopted country.

Longfellow was born in the same year in which his great English rival was born — 1809, at Portland in Maine. At the age of 17 he set out on a great tour through Europe. At the age of 20 he entered upon his duties as professor of modern languages in Bowdoin College. A few years later he set out once more on a journey to Europe accompanied by his young wife, who died on the way at Rotterdam. In his widely popular poem: *The Footsteps of Angels*, he alludes to her under the designation of "the Being Beauteous". He married again, was supremely happy with his wife and five children, but lost her in a tragic manner, as she was burnt to death before his eyes (1861). Already in 1835 Longfellow had accepted a professorship at the famous Harvard College in Cambridge, a suburb of Boston. For twenty years he lectured in this great centre of American literary life. In 1855 he resigned his post and continued to live in honourable and studious leisure up to his death in 1882 in his well-known old house, hallowed by the memory of George Washington, devoting his time to literature, the acknowledged patriarch of American poetry.

His first collection of poems appeared in 1839 under the title of *Voices of the Night*. In this collection we find his Psalm of Life which made his name a household word in America. The next collection appeared in 1841 under the title of *Ballads and other Poems*, in which he showed his predilection for romantic and mediaeval subjects. Here we find his *Skeleton in Armour*, in which a viking tells his romantic adventures connected with the first discovery of America by the Normans; then *The Wreck of the Hesperus*, which reminds us of Goethe's *Erlking*; his masterly translation of Uhland's *Luck of Edenhall*; and his *Village Blacksmith* with its Puritan moral: the ideal

of life is hard work on week-days, the sermon on the sabbath-day. The most popular poem of this collection is *Excelsior*, in which we see the ideal of the American in his bold forward career, going ahead, overleaping every obstacle. The poem at once became a favourite and the word *Excelsior* a household word and a motto of the nation.

The Belfry of Bruges and Other Poems appeared in 1846; here we find his *Old Clock on the Stairs* with its burden For ever — never! Never — for ever! which accompanies us through all the vicissitudes of human existence. In the collection *Seaside and Fireside* occurs the poem *The Building of the Ship* which has been compared with Schiller's Song of the Bell. The ship is launched under the name of Union and is represented as a symbol of the greater Ship of State, the American Union.

His *Tales of a Wayside Inn* and its continuation *Aftermath*, are a collection of romantic tales set in a frame in imitation of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. A promiscuous set of people happen to meet at the Red Horse Inn on a rainy day and tell each other tales and legends well-known in Europe, as e. g. the romantic love of Eginhardt for the daughter of Charlemagne.

Longfellow's Idyll "*Evangeline*" tries to introduce the classical verse of Homer into English literature. The touching story of the persecution and expulsion of the French settlers of Nova Scotia or Acadia by the English and the separation of *Evangeline* from her betrothed lover; her search for him until at last she finds him, after many years, dying in a hospital, — has maintained its popularity to the present day.

Longfellow's Indian epic *Hiawatha* appeared in 1855. With its fantastic world of Indian myths and feelings, the poem is a glorious sunset of the race of Red Men.

His Drama *The Golden Legend* is based on Hartmann von Aue's legend, der Arme Heinrich. But whilst in the German poem love alone induces the innocent maiden to sacrifice herself, Longfellow represents her as a religious enthusiast and visionary. He certainly succeeded in giving a faithful picture of the religious life of mediaeval Germany.

Longfellow has translated with equal felicity from Teutonic and Romance languages; as may be seen both in his collective work: *The Poets and Poetry of Europe* and in his excellent version of Dante's Divine Comedy.

His last work *Hyperion* he calls a romance, but it really contains in the shape of a loosely connected novel a careful description of Germany and of German life, and an enthusiastic appreciation of German literature.

Though not a poet of the first order, Longfellow stands forth as a

noble and pure character and as a lyric poet of deep and true feeling and of great felicity of diction; moreover as a tasteful and faithful interpreter of European thought, in which quality he bridged over the gulf which existed between the New and the Old World.

William Cullen Bryant, 1794—1878,

is essentially American and can hardly be fully appreciated outside his country; but there he was the representative of the American spirit in poetry, journalism, public oratory. He descended from one of the passengers whom the famous ship "Mayflower" brought over to the New World in 1640. Born at Cunnington in Massachusetts as the son of a distinguished physician and man of refined taste and judgment, he became an excellent lawyer, journalist, and politician. The poem with which the young man at once caused a great sensation, was called *Thanatopsis*, an extraordinary performance both in spirit and form for a young student!

The poem is a hymn on Nature who possesses the eternal eloquence of joy and beauty for him who tries to seize her in her visible shapes. She dissolves all bitterness which life breeds in the human breast and steals as a comforting genius into his dark dreams. Therefore, when the grey forms of death haunt thee, step forth into the open air and listen to the voices of Nature. When thou diest, the earth takes back her fruit to turn it once more into earth. Thou art a brother of the unfeeling rock and the idle clod which the ploughman walks on. There thou wilt sleep together with patriarchs and kings, sages and noble men, youths and old men, confined in the great universal tomb. The valleys in their contemplative repose, the sublime primeval forest, the majestic river, the plaintive stream, the melancholy grey desolation of the ocean: all are only the solemn frame-work and setting of the great tomb of humanity. The present generation is but a very small number, a passing show, in comparison with those who sleep already in the earth. Therefore live so that when thou hearest the summons to join the great caravan, thou art not driven like a slave in the night who has been whipped to his couch by the gaoler, but lie down to thy last rest like one who quietly draws his coverlet over himself to sink into dreams.

But the poet does not preach idle resignation. In his poem "*The Ages*" he shows himself the friend of progress and the champion of liberty.

He begins by strewing grateful palm branches to the noble sages of old and bestows enthusiastic praise on the times celebrated by ancient bards, when love never cooled, when friendship was unalloyed with selfish thoughts, and when the true worth of the man won him the crown. But we moderns should not despair. The Creator who stamped his signature on Nature, will not allow the world to grow barren and desolate. Or do you think that Nature shows signs of decay? The good always forces its way in the end; but virtue cannot thrive among slaves. Freedom took up its abode in Greece whose soil was

drenched with the blood of her noblest sons. Rome too suffered itself to be thrown into fetters and succumbed to the Nations of the North. The star of love that had risen over the Sea of Galilee, strove to pierce the darkness of time, but it grew pale before the fires of the autos-da-fé kindled by fanatics. The pathway to Heaven was open only to the man who could pave it with gold; but Truth survived and now at last Freedom has found a home — on the free soil of America.

Bryant's holiest of holies was the temple of Nature. She was his first mistress, the lady-love of his youth and he preserved his faith to her to the last. His poems are the melodious echo of the lovely scenes of American landscape. He has much in common with Wordsworth; both are quiet and serious and then only fully themselves when they can enjoy an undisturbed reflective contemplation of Nature; both sought solitude which gave them serener joys than the turmoil of society and the wild play of the passions.

Bryant's style is simple and unaffected with a strong preference for words of Anglo-Saxon origin in contradistinction to many American writers who prefer "Johnsonian English".

Bryant was *the public orator* when the monument of Goethe was unveiled in the Central Park of New York and again at the opening of the World's Fair at Philadelphia at the centenary of the Declaration of Independence — 1876. Two years later he died and, as he had wished in one of his first poems, in the month of June:

"I gazed upon the glorious sky
And the green mountains round,
And thought that when I came to lie
At rest within the ground,
'Twere pleasant that in flowery June,
When brooks send up a cheerful tune,
And groves a joyous sound,
The sexton's hand, my grave to make,
The rich, green mountain-turf should break."

John Greenleaf Whittier, 1807—1892,

ranks next to Bryant and Longfellow. The former surpasses him in faithful description of nature, the latter in melody and beauty of sound; but Whittier surpasses either in masculine power, independence of thought, and energy of language. His strength lies in his ballads and in his poems on the events of the time. Sometimes he ventures on the domain of the Idyll as in his beautiful story in verse *Snow-Bound* (1865) in which he, the Quaker, describes the quiet life, security, and sweetness of his Quaker-home contrasted

with the wild conflict of the elements that rages in a snow-storm around his block-house in the wood.

Among his *Home Ballads*, *Poems and Lyrics* (1860) we find the charming romance *Maud Müller* on the love of the simple peasant maid and of the proud judge, which has so sweet a beginning and so sad an end.

Most important are the poems which form a running commentary on the eventful time in which he lived; one day they will be referred to as historical documents. Here he appears as the passionate pleader for the cause of liberty. The poems which he wrote during the War of Secession for the emancipation of the negro slaves prove once more that in the great struggles of mankind all the great poets of all times fought under the banner of freedom. But he is not a poet of the day in the ordinary sense of the word, for the event which inspires him at the moment, only serves him as an occasion and starting-point for a poem of general and human interest. So in his beautiful poem on the tremendous conflagration that destroyed *Chicago* which ends in the following hopeful strain:

“Rise, stricken city! — from thee throw
The ashen sackcloth of thy woe;
And build, as to Amphion’s strain,
To songs of cheer thy walls again!

How shrivelled in thy hot distress
The primal sin of selfishness!
How instant rose, to take thy part,
The angel in the human heart!

Ah! not in vain the flames that tossed
Above thy dreadful holocaust.
The Christ again had preached through thee
The Gospel of Humanity!

Then lift once more thy towers on high,
And fret with spires the western sky,
To tell that God is yet with us,
And love is still miraculous!

Walt Whitman, 1819—1892,

is honoured in America as one of the greatest poets, though we Europeans who cling to the idea that poetry requires some metrical form, rhythm, rhyme, harmony, not only poetical feeling, would demur to the claim. He is one of the grand and rugged self-made men who are an honour to, and a peculiar charm of, American society. The son of a poor carpenter, he received

only a very elementary education, was apprenticed to a printer, turned country schoolmaster, then journalist. During the Civil War he nursed with infinite patience and goodness many thousands of sick and wounded in the hospitals. But he was not satisfied with this practical activity, and published a series of very curious works of poetry of extraordinary originality and lyrical inspiration, written without rhyme or metre in long-winded periods but in powerful language and highly expressive images; recitatives in which his admirers find a grand and hidden melody, as in the music of Wagner or in the roar of the sea.

History, be it classical antiquity with Greek gods and Roman heroes, be it romanticism with mediaeval knights and crusaders etc. — all this great human past is dead to him; he lives in the mighty present, a modern man. Nobler than all the great monuments of history, pyramids, temples, cathedrals, and mediaeval castles are the palaces of Industry, reared by Americans as monuments of their energy and intelligence. Let us abandon the worn-out themes of poetry, away with the songs of war, with sickly romanticism, with the dramas and novels which describe court-life, with the sugary rhymes of love-ditties: the New World offers other subjects which are healthy to the core.

These are the ideas which he expresses in the collections of his poetry: *Leaves of Grass*, *Drum-taps*, *Song of the Open Road*, *Song of the Broad Axe*. The axe is an important factor in the history of American civilisation. Its sound announces conquest, victory over nature, freedom, independence. He touches the same string in his poem on the Centennial Celebration of American Independence in 1876. Let the muse at last forget her old legends, let the crusaders rest on their laurels, the ire of Achilles cool down, and let her betake herself to a new field of fresh and free activity; let America be her home in the future.

His poem on the death of the great wielder of the axe, the carpenter Abraham Lincoln, murdered as president of the republic in spring 1865, begins with the following words which may give an idea of his style:

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.
Ever-returning spring, Trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial, and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.

O powerful, western, fallen star!
O shades of night! O moody, tearful night!
O great star disappear'd! O the black murk that hides the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless! O helpless soul of me!
O harsh surrounding cloud, that will not free my soul!

Bayard Taylor, 1825—1878,

was born as the son of a poor farmer and died as Ambassador of the United States at Berlin. Working on his father's farm, he developed an insatiable appetite for reading and used every opportunity to enlarge his knowledge, so that he could for a time take the post of a schoolmaster. Feeling strongly attracted to literature he entered a publishing business as printer's apprentice. A book on Rural Life in Germany directed his attention to that country, and in 1844 he started on a tour to Europe with 140 dollars in his pocket. The fruit of this his first journey was his book: "*Views Afoot, or Europe with Knapsack and Staff*". Now his appetite was roused and in the following thirty years he travelled over the whole world writing his books of travel as he went along, the greatest writer of travels America has produced. His descriptions are most interesting, full of life and colour. In 1850 appeared *Eldorado*, or Adventures in the Path of Empire, a graphic description of California; in 1853 "*A Visit to India, China, and Japan*". Then his "*Northern Travels*" to England and Scandinavia; then in 1874 his "*Egypt and Iceland*". But Germany was his favourite country; to become the interpreter of German thought his noblest ambition. His "*Studies in German Literature*" show his intimate familiarity with the spirit of German poetry; his *Translation of Goethe's Faust* is by far the best of the 37 English translations that exist. No wonder he was welcomed with enthusiasm when his country appointed him Ambassador to the German Empire, and when he died at Berlin, the German poet Berthold Auerbach who pronounced his funeral sermon, justly said: "Du warst beglaubigter Abgesandter von einer Staatsmacht zur andern, und beglaubigter Abgesandter von einer Geistesmacht zur andern."

His poems — At Home and Abroad — Poems of the Orient — Poems of Home and Travel etc. are rich in colour and images of striking effect, but he likes to touch unaccustomed strings and to elicit unusual melodies. They are no easy reading; they reveal a deep and matured philosophy of life and a heart tried by experience which "bloomed and bled in songs".

Among the great **Historians** America has produced, I mention Bancroft, Prescott, and Ticknor.

Bancroft's great History of the United States of North America is a monumental work though it embraces only the history of the foundation of the American colonies and the history of the War of Independence. The work bears evidence of his philosophical training; his style is clear and elevated, his delineation of character is masterly, his description

of events and of scenery is most graphic. His career as a statesman was most successful, as he became Naval Minister, Ambassador at the Court of St. James, Ambassador at the Court of Prussia.

Prescott is the most picturesque historian of America; he is a great artist and his books of history have all the interest of romances. He fixed upon the great period of Spanish history in which the New World was discovered and conquered by the bold Castilian adventurers. In 1837 his great work appeared on: *The Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella*, a masterly work in which not only the political condition of Spain but also its literature, science, and art are treated with consummate skill. It was followed by his *History of the Conquest of Mexico* and his *History of the Conquest of Peru*, books which enthral the attention and excite the imagination of the reader in an extraordinary manner. He completed the work of his life with the *History of Philip II.* When he died in 1859, he — struggling against blindness and at last completely blind — had thrown more light on the great century of the Spanish past than any other historian.

His work was rounded off and completed by his friend, teacher, and biographer *George Ticknor*, who wrote a classical *History of Spanish Literature.*

Essayists, Novelists, Humourists.

ESSAYISTS.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1803—1882,

may be called a teacher and prophet of his nation as Carlyle was for the English. Like Carlyle with whom he was on terms of closest friendship, he tried to oppose the rising flood of materialism and dollarworship and to preach an idealism and an ethical gospel inspired by German philosophy. He did, however, not build up a complete philosophical system, but scattered his ideas in essays, lectures, poems, contributions to periodicals.

He is the most eloquent representative of that American transcendental philosophy which exalts the idea of individualism and of personal independence. According to him all men are intellectually and morally equally gifted by nature, and every one bears in himself the germ of genius, to be a hero, or a poet, or a thinker; to develop this germ into the full-blown plant nothing is needed but

the favour of circumstances. Nature is the revelation of God; and God is beauty, wisdom, love, and power. A healthy, bracing, and elevating tone, inspiring joy and energy for goodness pervades his writings which have more than those of any other author raised the moral standard of American life.

James Russell Lowell, 1819—1891,

is like Irving and Taylor, at the same time scholar, poet, and diplomatist. His Essays "Among my Books" and "My Study Windows", his Political Essays, and, last of all, his "Latest Literary Essays" prove his excellence as a critic; his book on The Old English Dramatists is an important contribution to the history of the drama. But to the public at large Lowell is, and will always be, the author of the *Biglow Papers*, one of the cleverest and wittiest satires on the political life of his time.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, 1809—1894,

was a professor of medicine and an authority in his profession; but he found time to write many poems, both serious and amusing (the One Hoss Shay),*) novels, excellent essays. His most popular books are *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, *The Professor at the Breakfast Table*, and *the Poet at the Breakfast Table*.

NOVELISTS.

Fenimore Cooper, 1789—1851,

had for many years a wider circle of fascinated readers than any other novelist in the world; a second Columbus, he discovered America, the America of the primeval forest and the prairie, of the Red Indians and the buffalo. And even at the present day our boys read with delight of the adventures of The Deerslayer, The Last of the Mohicans, The Pathfinder and of Leatherstocking and imitate their heroes in mimic warfare and in Indian warpaint. Nay Fenimore Cooper probably enjoyed and enjoys a wider popularity in Europe than in America where the idealised picture of savage life could be too closely controlled by personal experience.

Whilst Cooper appealed to the imagination,

Harriet Beecher Stowe, 1812—1896,

moved the hearts of her readers. Her social novel "*Uncle Tom's Cabin*", 1852, in which she gave an appalling and highly sensational

*) the One Horse Chaise.

picture of slave-life in the southern states of the Union, roused the conscience of contemporary America and won the sympathies of the whole continent of Europe for the Abolitionists in the great struggle for the liberation of the slaves.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, 1804—1864,

Is undoubtedly the greatest American novelist, worthy to rank with the most distinguished novelists of the mother-country. The best known of his works, the masterpiece of American romance, is *The Scarlet Letter*, 1850, a deep psychological study and a picturesque and realistic description of American life at the time of stern and gloomy Puritanism. Also in his *Marble Faun* which he wrote in Italy he shows his wonderful art of describing conflicts of the soul.

Among the many novelists of the second half of the 19th century I mention

Henry James,

born 1843, who has written a great number of novels dealing with psychological problems, one of the most interesting is *The American* in which he contrasts the useful and energetic, practical and modern American self-made man with the effete nobility of the Faubourg St. Germain in Paris.

Two good historical novels have been written of late by *Winston Churchill*, the one *Richard Carvel* dealing with the War of Independence, the other *the Crisis* dealing with the great Civil War.

AMERICAN HUMOURISTS.

American humour is a thing apart like the American climate; the humour of Sterne, of Dickens, of Jean Paul is strongly diluted with sentimentalism. While listening to these humourists our eyes sometimes grow moist with tears,—here humour has retained something of its original and literal meaning. American humour is not moist in this sense of the word; we may call it “dry humour” with a happy *contradictio in adjecto*. It is certainly somewhat grotesque; the delight in exaggeration sometimes degenerates into sheer nonsense. One peculiarity it has in the highest degree: the serious tone in which the merriest things are related. In this contrast lies the charm which the American humourist exercises on the naïve reader. Of course the reader must be willing to be charmed and readily allow himself to be hoaxed. If a man cannot take a joke, he

should not read Bret Harte or Mark Twain, no more than he should see an English pantomime.

Bret Harte, 1835—1902,

was twenty years ago one of the most widely popular American authors. Many Europeans had learned to understand and to love America only through his tales. It was Freiligrath who first revealed him to Germany, where he lived for some years as consul in Krefeld. Bret Harte educated himself, and life was his best tutor. His *Short Stories* are life of his own life, they are true in the highest sense of the word.

His domain is narrowly circumscribed, but here he is absolutely the master: Californian society after the discovery of the goldfields. These descriptions will in the future when the society which he describes has altogether passed away, have all the significance of a great historical document. The wild and lawless society of adventurers, half heroes, half criminals, lives before us in his tales. What must endear him to us is his unshaken optimism. Through all the horrors of the wild deeds of these barbarians he discovers the indelible germ of human goodness. A trivial event will awaken it, as in the beautiful tale "*The Luck of Roaring Camp*", where a child which happens to be born at the cost of his mother's life in a camp of gold diggers in the Sierra Nevada, transforms these savages into careful nurses and gradually humanises them.

The Outcasts of Poker Flat, *Tennessee's Partner*, and *Miggles* must also be mentioned; and *Miss* the heroine of a little drama of wild forest life, a kind of Mignon, translated from classic Italy into savage California. Bret Harte has described this society of outcasts also in his *songs*; in one of them — *Dickens in Camp* — he describes the effect of his great English colleague's poetry on these wild ruffians. The poem was an offering at the grave of Dickens in 1870.

A second speciality of Bret Harte is the description of the *Chinese element* of the population of California. He was the first to strike this rich vein. In his ballad of *Truthful James* he shows how the cunning of the Heathen Chinese overreaches even Yankee 'cuteness.

A peculiar trait of his — and American humour in general, is the quiet and innocent manner in which tricks of craft and crime and deeds of violence are told, very simple and mild terms being used to heighten the effect by contrast. When e. g. in his poem "The Society on the Stanislaw" in which he describes a terrible row occasioned by a dispute arising in a Naturalist Club called The Stanislaw, the president has a heavy piece of red-sandstone hurled at his head, the poet refers to the result saying:

And he smiled a kind of sickly smile, and curled up on the floor,
And the subsequent proceedings interested him no more.

Mark Twain, 1835—1910,

was the name assumed by *Samuel Langhorne Clemens*, when he began to write. The name reminds us of the second stage in the development

of this entirely self-made man. Printer, boatswain on the Mississippi (Mark twain = mark two fathoms!), reporter for the Press, public lecturer, successful author, — he won, lost, and regained a fortune and died as the acknowledged patriarch of American literature, the admired and beloved self-appointed Jester to his Majesty the American People to free them of cant, sham, and humbug and teach them commonsense.

His chief charm is the naïve unconsciousness with which he says his opinions on men and things, be they ever so different from the opinions of the generality of mankind. As he does not live in the shadow of a Mighty Past, — which he ignores, — his mind is absolutely without prejudice or bias. He takes things as he finds them, works of art, customs, institutions, — and says his impressions of them, impressions made on a mind shrewd by nature, absolutely fearless, and not awed by time-honoured beliefs. Nothing imposes upon him, nothing daunts him, and so he chaffs our highly civilised and often highly absurd generation in a witty and amusing manner. But he does not hesitate for a moment to laugh at himself too. Most popular are his humorous descriptions of travel where the fun freely allies itself with the incident of personal experience. *The Innocents abroad* or the New Pilgrims' Progress is the description of a Pleasure Excursion to Europe and the Holy Land in 1867 occasioned by the Paris Exhibition of that year. The contrast between the scenes hallowed by the associations of history, art, and religion and the refreshing ignorance and the sound common-sense of these American globe-trotters is most amusing. The fun lies in the quaint and amusing descriptions and judgments on everything Mark Twain sees. See him standing at the *Tomb of Adam*!

"How touching it was, here in the land of strangers, far away from home and friends and all who cared for me, thus to discover the grave of a blood-relation! True a distant one, but still a relation. The unerring instinct of nature thrilled its recognition. The fountain of my filial affection was stirred to its profoundest depths, and I gave way to a tumultuous emotion. I leaned upon a pillar and burst into tears. I deem it no shame to have wept over the grave of my poor dead relative. Let him who would sneer at my emotion close this volume here, for he will find little to his taste in my journeying through Holy Land. Noble old man — he did not live to see his child. And I — I alas — I did not live to see him. Weighed down by sorrow and disappointment, he died before I was born — six thousand brief summers before I was born. But let us try to bear it with fortitude. Let us trust that he is better off where he is. Let us take comfort in the thought that his loss is our eternal gain!"

The *Tramp Abroad* (1880) continued to work this vein without exhausting it. Mark Twain has been present at some students' duel in Heidelberg and the scene of slaughter and bloodshed has made a deep impression on him. He gives a full account of it, then turns to relate the ridiculous duel of Gambetta and Fourtoun in 1778, when these heroes met one morning in a thick fog and shot at each other at a distance of 35 yards with toy revolvers. The poet quite seriously pretends to have acted as second to Gambetta and overhears him studying and learning by heart the last words he will say when he dies: I die that France may live!

A passage of exquisite drollery is suggested by the sight of an ant-hill which he comes across in the Black Forest. He watches the ants at their work and comes to the conclusion that this favourite of goody-goody stories is an utter humbug.

A fine passage of self-irony is that in which he describes his seeing an old lady in the English Church at Baden, somewhat shabbily dressed and who feels ill at ease among the fashionable crowd. He works himself up into a disposition of greatest pity with her and plans to offer the poor invalid his elegant carriage to take her home on leaving church. But on rising after the service he discovers that he has wasted his pity on — the old German Empress Augusta.

Think of the Tramp's and his friend's Harris ascent of Righi where the two friends discover that the sun which they thought had just risen was actually setting, and that they in their night-gowns and wrapped up in blankets are the laughing stock of a whole table d'hôte company, every one of them in evening dress.

Charming books are *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* — a boy's story —, *Tom Sawyer Detective*, the *Adventures of Huckleberry Fin* and many others. It may be safely asserted that no author in the world, no lecturer and after-dinner speaker has made his audience laugh such a hearty, wholesome, and innocent laugh as Mark Twain.

Conclusion.

At the close of this perhaps daring attempt to condense so vast a subject into so narrow a compass, I express my conviction that both English and American Literature, as they had a great past, will have a great future. As to the *English Empire*, — the great Dependencies of Canada, the Cape, Australia, New Zealand, are rapidly developing into great nations. At present they are occupied in laying the *material* foundations of great communities; but when this process is finished, they will raise upon these foundations a culture which, though rooted in the old Mother Country, will be differentiated according to their climatic and social individualities.

The United States of America, the land of "unlimited possibilities", are developing their educational system so thoroughly and conscientiously and are advancing in science and art with such rapid strides that it is impossible to prognosticate what surprises may be in store for the student of literature. So much appears certain that the energy, keenness, and originality of the American intellect will secure to the United States also with regard to Literature a high, if not the first place among the leading nations of the world.

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